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IN JESUIT LAND

THE JESUIT MISSIONS OF PARAGUAY

BY

W. H. KOEBEL

AUTHOR OF

"ARGENTINA: PAST AND PRESENT" "IN THE MAORILAND BUSH"
"PORTUGAL: ITS LAND AND PEOPLE" "URUGUAY" "MADEIRA:
OLD AND NEW" "MODERN ARGENTINA" "HODSON'S VOYAGE"
"THE ANCHORAGE" "THE RETURN OF JOE" "THE SINGULAR
REPUBLIC" "THE SEAT OF MOODS"

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

MR. R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM

FIFTY-FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS

IN HALF TONE

LONDON

STANLEY PAUL & CO.

31 ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.

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RUINED JESUIT CHURCH AT APOSTOLES.

Frontispiece.]

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

WHEN Mr. Cunninghame Graham made me his generous offer of an Introduction to this work, I, in snatching at his gift with both hands, expressed to him a fear that this preliminary matter might overshadow the remainder of the work. Now that the whole is in type it seems to me that this fear was well grounded. But if the general public benefit—as it cannot fail to do—so much the better for all concerned.

I have to thank Mr. James L. Harper, general manager of the Argentine North Eastern Railway, and many members of the staff for much kindly assistance in my travels, and Messrs. Freund and Duffield for their great hospitality when beyond the scope of the railway lines. The majority of the photographs were taken by Mr. R. A. Bennett, who accompanied me. For those illustrating the various Indian types I am indebted to the South American Missionary Society, and, more indirectly, to the Messrs. Leach of Jujuy.

INTRODUCTION AND RETROSPECT

THE author entered the Jesuit Missions last year from the south, in the train. I, who write this retrospect (or perhaps introduction), entered them from the north, riding a certain white horse that I had in those days, some thirty or more years ago, having set out from Asuncion.

The writer travelled, possibly, two days. I rode a fortnight, swimming the rivers, sleeping sometimes in native huts, sometimes alone beside my horse out on some little plain, for it was dangerous to approach a wood, as tigers swarmed.

The country was almost uninhabited, and if you met a stranger, he usually was one of that kind one does not care to meet alone, unless you have a horse such as my Blanco was, who could turn on a handkerchief, as the saying used to go, and stop in two or three sharp bounds when at full speed. Then, indeed, one felt more confident, for a good horse imparts his spirit to his rider, just as a bold rider gives his courage to his horse.

When I arrived at what is now Posadas, and then was called La Candelaria, we crossed the Uruguay, on a great flying bridge, and I remember seeing a Brazilian mount his horse, which blazed with silver trappings, and jump him from the bridge into the water, which was about two feet in depth. When the horse felt the water, he started bucking; but the Brazilian sat like a statue in his saddle, holding his gun in his right hand. I see him now, occasionally, in my mind's eye, and hear the splashing of his horse's feet; and when I see him, all the years roll back, and I am sitting on my Blanco, waiting my turn to spur him off the bridge.

These were the humours of the road in those days, and the trail I followed led me through Cáacupé, Quindé, and Santa Rosa, and so by Itapua, to the frontier.

The country that I travelled through was that in which the Paraguayan Missions once flourished, and formed, with all the faults of the administration of the Jesuits, as nearly an Arcadia as any place on earth.

Naturally, an Arcadia is a matter of opinion, and controversy has raged fiercely about the missions on the Paraná.

Fathers Charlevoix and Muratori praise, and Padre Melchoir Inshoffer condemns, but the latter had been expelled from the Order of the Jesuits.

Voltaire and Montesquieu each break a lance in favour of the scheme the Jesuits continued.

Dean Funes, the historian of Buenos Aires, and Felix de Azara, the Spanish naturalist, praise or condemn, according to their views. The Dean, who, born in Tucumán amongst an Indian population, looked on the Indians in a kindly way as fellow-creatures, says of them : "The serenity of mind of all these Indians in the midst of the greatest troubles is without equal in the world : never a sigh, with them, takes off the bitterness of suffering."

Azara, on the other hand, writes as a Liberal would write of Socialism. He was all theory, and to him the semi-communism of the Jesuit Missions was anathema. As he was a kindly and a scientific man, he is most quoted by all those who hate the Jesuits. He laments the state of tutelage in which the Indians lived, and seems to think of them as free and independent men who had been deprived of liberty, instead of gentle, helpless creatures, who, left alone to hold their own amongst the Spanish colonists, would soon have been enslaved.

He forgot that, as the Dean says, "the sentiment of property was very weak amongst the Indians," and that their minds "were not degraded by the vice of avarice."

Azara thought, and this opinion was held by all the Liberals of his day, that freedom only meant the power to vote.

We who have had our minds purged to some measure, by experience, from cant, know that a man can vote and be a slave.

After the expulsion of the Jesuits, as Dean Funes says, "an imperious tone was substituted for the paternal manner of the Jesuits." In fact, they had been rendered free to starve. In eight-and-twenty years, says the Dean in his *Ensayo Critico*, the Indian population had almost disappeared, after the Jesuits were gone.

Little by little, the remnants struggled back and grouped themselves around the old *capillas* (chapels), the name by which the settlements then were known. In them they lived a semi-Christian, semi-heathen life until the Paraguayan war, in 1866 to 1870, once more destroyed the greater portion of the men.

After the war, and when the population was increasing slowly, I journeyed through them, and saw the remains of the old Jesuit towns, the neglected churches, and the curious services, conducted by the Indians, without a priest to lead their prayers.

Unlike most other parts of South America in those days, a man was perfectly secure both as to life and property in all the mission towns, crime was unknown, and although sexual morality was lax, the old *capillas* might be said, even in those days, to be Arcadias, even if submerged a little as to ritual and works.

I remember feeling a sort of calm, as if I had

come home to some place that I had seen in dreams, upon arriving at a Jesuit village in the woods.

“The towns were built all round a square,¹ the church and stone houses filled one end, and the dwellings of the Indians, formed of sun-dried bricks or wattled canes, with their long penthouses, completed the three sides. . . . The space in the middle of the square was carpeted with the finest grass, kept short by being pastured close by sheep. The churches, sometimes built of stone, and sometimes of the hard woods with which the country abounds, were beyond all description splendid, taking into consideration the remoteness of the Jesuit towns from the outside world.”

Don Francisco Graell, an officer of dragoons in the war of 1756, gives the following description of the church of San Miguel:—

“This church is of good size, and is built entirely of hewn stone. It has three aisles and a dome, well built and painted. It has a magnificent portico.”

This description applies to several of the churches I have seen, except that it is not usual that the church should have been of hewn stone. To these neglected villages, inhabited by Indians dressed in white and wearing a cloak of scarlet baize or cloth according to their rank, their women dressed in a shift, cut rather low, and a short petticoat, their long black hair hang-

¹ I quote from my own book, *A Vanished Arcadia*.

ing down their backs and spread upon the forehead like a horse's forelock, one used to come by tracks through the thick woods.

The forests stretch off into wide *sábanas*. "These open rolling plains . . . are generally studded thickly with stunted palms called Yatais, but not so thickly as to spoil the grass which covers them in spring and early summer, and even in winter they remain good feeding grounds.

"Thick clumps of timber break up the prairie here and there into peninsulas and islands, and in the hollows and rocky valleys bushy palmetto rises above the horses' knees.

"In general, the soil is of a rich, bright red, which, gleaming through the trees, gives a peculiarly warm colour to the land."

The trees are numerous and varied, and nearly all give fine hard wood.

The shrubs are quite as interesting and still more various than the trees. "But if the shrubs are myriad, the flowers are past the power of man to count. Lianas with their yellow, red, and purple clusters of blossoms, like enormous bunches of grapes, hang from the forest trees. . . . The *Labiatiæ*, *Compositæ*, *Daturæ*, *Umbelliferæ*, *Convolvulaceæ*, and many other species cover the ground in spring or run up the trees and bushes, after the fashion of our honey-suckle and the traveller's joy.

“ . . . In every wood the orange, lemon, and the sweet lime have become wild and formed great thickets.”¹

Such was the country of the Missions between the rivers Paraguay and Paraná.

Between the Paraná and Uruguay, the land of which our author treats, the plains become more open and the woods less dense ; but round their edges, red and blue macaw soar like huge hawks, humming-birds hover on the flowers, and in the lakes and rivers alligators bask.

The Mission towns resemble those of Paraguay, and at the present railhead in Los Apostoles there was a celebrated church.

The description that the author gives of the deserted plaza of the town might do for that of any of the towns in Paraguay.

His description also of the three riders carrying their flag, who had come out to bid the people to a wake, is something like that of a hundred descriptions of Jesuit life in all the Mission towns.

The inventory of this very town of Los Apostoles, furnished to the Viceroy Bucareli of Buenos Aires, and printed by Brabo (“Inventarios de los bienes, hallados a la expulsion de los Jesuitas”), gives a curious and complete picture of the festivals of which the author only saw, as it were, the shadow of a shade.

¹ *A Vanished Arcadia*, p. 171.

“All the militia of the town were in attendance, mounted on their best horses and armed with lances, lazo, poles, and a few with guns. The officers of the Indians rode at their head, dressed out in gorgeous clothes, and troops of dancers at stated intervals performed a sort of Pyrrhic dance between the squadrons of the cavalry. In the front of all rode, on a white horse, the Alfarez Real, dressed in a doublet of blue velvet richly laced with gold, a waistcoat of brocade, and with short velvet breeches gartered with silver lace; upon his feet shoes decked with silver buckles, and on his head a gold-laced hat.”

In his hand he held the royal standard. The flag the author saw in the poor Indian rider's hands was the legitimate but pale simulacrum of the royal banner of the olden times.

For a description of the daily lives of the Jesuits of old, nothing is fuller than the curious letter of Nicolas Ñeengiureí, written originally in Guaraní, and found in the archives of Simancas.

The letter is the production of a simple Indian, and certainly the life that he describes is simple, almost Biblical; and as it was set down, not to prove anything, but only as it seems for his own use, for it was found when the town of San Lorenzo was taken by surprise (in 1756), it can be taken as a fair picture of the life of any Jesuit of those times in Paraguay.

Little enough in modern times has been recorded of the decaying Mission towns.

Therefore the author in his book, *In Jesuit Land*, has a fair field, and takes up an old tale once known to everybody ; but now forgotten, swallowed up by the increasing hurry of our modern life, just as so many of the thirty towns themselves were swallowed up by the devouring vegetation of the tropics after the Jesuits had been expelled.

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.

IN JESUIT LAND

PART I

THE PRESENT DAY

CHAPTER I

NORTHWARDS FROM BUENOS AIRES

From Buenos Aires to Concordia—The northward way—Changes of climate and temperature—An incident at Concordia—The cosmopolitan porter—An unexpected title—The favourite tint of the North-Eastern Railway—A delightful garden—Its inhabitants—Some flippancy at the start—Geography of Misiones—The start of the train—Pleasant surroundings—Commendable absence of dust—The passage of the locust cloud—Darkness and a hail of bodies—The upper Uruguay River—Aspects of the stream—An orange train—Colour and odour on wheels—Monte Caseros—Headquarters of the railway—Scenes at the station—Humanity and its clothes—The first forest patches—Increase in the number of Indian faces—Descendants of the Mission Guaranís—Influence of the railway—Some comparisons of past and present—Nature and the works of Man.

It was in September that we—or, to be more accurate, the vessel that carried us—steamed from Buenos Aires upstream to Concordia. The spring of the Southern Hemisphere was already advanced. Everywhere the peach trees had broken out into a rash of pink blossom that became perceptibly deeper

and fuller as the nose of the steamer bored her way through the waters to the warmer air of the north.

During the ascent of the great stream it had been possible to obtain nothing beyond mere occasional glimpses of these pleasant buddings. At Concordia, the port of disembarkation, we became for the first time really intimate with our surroundings. Then it was that we found that we had been flung bodily, as it were, into a season a couple of weeks in advance of that of Buenos Aires, which we had left only a few hours before. The phase is undoubtedly one of the most delightful of modern travel. To be able to order a change of temperature as easily as a whisky and soda is undoubtedly a proof of man's advancing dominion over nature.

Here in Concordia the land was rosy with the full blow of the peach blossom, and aglow with a multitude of more lowly placed flowers. But in this place I intend to give no lengthy description of Concordia. The town is merely a means to an end. In order to effect a journey such as lies before us it is necessary to take off from somewhere; therefore why not from Concordia?

It is unwise to begin with a digression. There are some captious folk who might object that this feat is an impossibility in itself. However this may be, Concordia cannot be dismissed without the relation of at least one occurrence that took place

within its very pleasant boundaries. As the river steamer edged her side towards the wharf of the town a knot of *changadores* stood in waiting upon the massive wooden platform. There was nothing strange in the presence of these porters. The incident of note lay in the fact that two of the company, pointing with customary enthusiasm towards where we stood on deck, hailed us with the joyously confident words: "Changador, *Mister*?"

Now it has been my fate to travel in many parts of South America. Yet even in national capitals such a title had never been accorded me. It was necessary to turn to the Invaluable Private Secretary, and to accuse him roundly of an over-indulgence in British externals. When this had been hotly denied, the incident closed.

Yet the thing left a disconcerting after-flavour. It was evident that this portion of Argentina was studying in grim earnest to adapt itself to the foreign tourist. It is true that we were bound for Misiones, one of the remotest corners of the Republic. Nevertheless, if this happened here, had we not reason to fear whisky advertisements and the harem skirt in the northern forests themselves? It is only right to admit that in the light of after events any apprehension on this head proved entirely groundless.

After this we arrive at an important point in the course of the journey. The station building of the

Argentine North-Eastern Railway is painted a soft green. The tint is evidently a favourite with the company. At all events, it enters largely in the decorative scheme of carriages and offices alike, with an effect that is distinctly pleasing. The station, moreover, possesses an attribute that suffices to increase yet further the already unjustifiable delay that attends the start of the journey proper.

Within the precincts of this terminus is a garden that is as full of delights as it is of flowers and shady trees. The blaze of subtropical blooms over which the myriad butterflies hover is completely hidden away from its surroundings. But for the faint hissings it would be impossible to believe that such prosaic monsters as railway engines could exist within miles of the spot.

The garden contains inhabitants of a weightier order than blossoms and butterflies. It contains, for one thing, a pond that in turn holds a crocodile. The existence of the crocodile I cannot doubt, since the proprietor of the garden, the general manager of the company, himself gave unhesitating assurances on the point—assurances that became increasingly emphasised on each occasion that we returned to find the water's surface void of even one inch of snout. On each occasion, however, the advancing footsteps sent a bevy of stout water tortoises plunging from the banks into the depths of the pool. They may have warned

the depressed saurian. Sharers of the same pond, a certain amount of friendship was proved by the mere fact of their continued existence.

It is necessary that the reader should bear with a certain amount of the lighter side of life, and even with flippancy, at the start. We are bound for a land of romance, it is true, the history of which is flecked darkly with pathos and tragedy—a country where man's endeavour, materialised in one of the stateliest organisations ever conceived in the history of the world, has been brought to naught. We are upon our way to see the few remnants of the great shell of its being, and there is no light comedy in ruins. But we are not yet there. It is permissible to chat upon the way.

In the meanwhile, being settled at length in the railway carriage in expectation of the engine's farewell whistle, there can be no harm in explaining beforehand the cruder geography of the Province of Misiones. Upon the extreme north-east of the Republic, Misiones juts out from the main body of Argentina into a sea of foreign territory that has Brazil on the one hand and Paraguay on the other. There you have the geography of the place in a nutshell. That it was one of the chief centres of the Jesuit dominion of old is evident from its name. But of its history and aspects, its ruins and associations, no more at present. It is too early as yet to cope with the tale of the

missions. That must unfold itself little by little as we go.

The train has started, and is already careering on its journey to the north. It is speeding past orange groves, orchards, and vineyards, plantations of eucalyptus, casuarina, and other trees, past palm lands and pastures that here and there hold stretches of turf as green and level as the grasses of England, flecked, moreover, by numbers of enormous mushrooms. At intervals rise tremendous blackberry clumps that pile themselves upwards to a dozen feet and more in height to rival the neighbouring bulkier erections of the prickly pear. Rumbling over bridges that span the dainty, wooded streams, the train sweeps on its course, parallel with the great Uruguay River, through a smiling land dotted with cattle *corrales* and with very delightful *estancia* houses.

Moreover, to add to the comfort of the journey, there is no dust—a commendable absence, the full benefit of which can only be experienced by those who have known the travelling farther south, where the floating earth rolls in dense clouds about the train, and, as though in revenge for its disturbance, enters thickly into every crevice of the compartment and of the passenger's person, daring an uncomfortable entry even into nostrils and mouth. But this is a land that can boast a subsoil of gravel and rock, and the well-laid permanent way is comfortingly

stationary and indissoluble, a supreme mercy in its way.

The day is perfect. It is only after some hesitation that I make the remark. In the first place, it lays the narrator open to the suspicion of pandering to the climate, possibly at the expense of truth, for the mere benefit of the popular idea of the fitness of things. Nevertheless, even at the risk of this, it is necessary to maintain the point. The sky is flecked with pure white clouds in numbers just sufficient to accentuate the deep azure of its tint. On the left rises a column of smoke from the grasslands that are being burned in order that the quality of the pasture may be improved. On the right is a far more important column, that covers almost a third of the horizon. But this is not smoke, though one who has never viewed flying locusts would swear confidently enough that it could be nothing else.

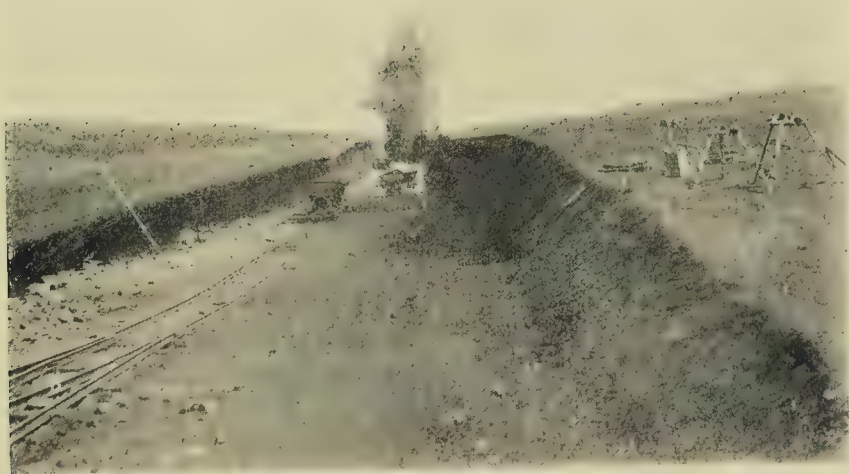
Presently the train, swinging round on its track, has entered the outskirts of the mass. The blue sky and white clouds have gone. In their place is a moving current of black that resembles—nothing except itself, unless it were such an impossible thing as a dark waterfall careering through the sky in a torrent parallel with the earth! The small hard bodies of the locusts are striking upon the windows like hail. There is a hasty rush to close every threatened aperture, but not before the bodies lie

fairly thick upon the floors of the compartments, and the acrid smell of the horde pervades every corner of the train.

As suddenly as it went out the sun appears again. The bodies of the stowaways are swept together and flung out upon the track, while the train steams onwards, bearing many thousand evidences of its victory in the crushed bodies that bespatter the front of the engine and carriages.

The Uruguay River is in sight once more, the upper reaches of the broad stream that, uncontaminated as yet by the mud of the lower current, runs, limpid and clear, over its rocky bed. Just now the verdure and palm-fringed waters shine out in brilliant blue. The lagoons that the grasslands separate from the river are of a duller tint, but not without their own interest, populated as they are by many water-birds, and by a species of tall, black, long-billed ibis.

At a small wayside station an orange train has come to a halt on its way to Concordia. The long, covered wagons are filled to overflowing with the golden-red fruit, the odour of which militates successfully even against the inevitable reek of steam and oil that accompanies the prosaic structure of the train itself. Presently the wagons move slowly ahead, and tons of oranges, and hundredweights of peel that a marmalade factory might well envy, go



AN ELECTRIC BLAST IN ROCK CUTTING OF ARGENTINE EXTENSION
TO PARAGUAY.



FOREST CLEARING, EXTENSION OF ARGENTINE N.E. RAILWAY
TO POSADAS.

gliding along to shed a golden shadow on the track as they pass.

Through the hills and over the rivers the journey proceeds, past more homesteads, fruit trees, pastures, and an increasing extent of native woodland clumps. At Monte Caseros on the banks of the Uruguay, the headquarters of the railway, there is bustle and animation in plenty. The gathering is picturesque here, and the variety of costume is rapidly becoming more marked. The wearers of clothes of conventional cut are still fairly numerous; but the garments of the humbler folk show an increase of individuality as the complexions darken beneath the warmer sun. For one thing, it may be taken as an axiom that the farther north are the wearers, the broader and more baggy become the trousers, until all resemblance to the garments of the cities is lost in a double mass of drooping folds.

The fall of night occurs very shortly after Monte Caseros has been left behind, and for many reasons this is just as well, for the landscape and scenes of the route, although becoming gradually wilder, are almost identical with those already passed. Therefore it is possible to turn into the comfortable bunk of the *dormitorio* with a good conscience. When bound for a spot beyond the range of railway lines, it is best to make all possible use of such comforts while they still exist.

By some fortunate chance the railway time-table has adapted itself admirably to the viewing of the transformations in scenery. The earliest light of the morning shows the hills of the open *Campo* still to right and left; but the first patches of forest have just come in sight ahead, the heralds of a more mysterious and picturesque land.

The quest, in fact, is growing warm. Only a few score of kilometres intervene now between the train and the frontier of Misiones. We have already entered a country that is to all intents and purposes a colony of Argentina proper. As the engine grinds to a halt at a small station the features and complexions of the majority of the men upon the platform are frankly Indian. Their raiment, moreover, has blossomed out into all colours. They are, indeed, the descendants of the Guaraní natives whom the Jesuits ruled and taught, and they remain Guaraní still in aspect and speech.

There are no Jesuits in Misiones now, and of the great organisation whose towns and settlements covered a considerable area of Paraguay, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil nothing survives but the ruins of the churches and cities, and a few poor survivals of the ancient customs that were attended by so much pomp and ceremony.

The railway is now bringing about a second, and

very vital, awakening of the fertile land. But this is an affair of the present day. Since 1767, when the Jesuits were expelled by royal decree from their possessions, the land has lain dormant, although, curiously enough, many of modern Argentina's great men hail from its territories. A defence of the methods of the missionary Fathers enters neither into this book nor into my mind. There is possibly much that can be brought against them with justice. Yet, so far as their actual work is concerned, its imperishable monument lies in a series of astonishing facts and in a very simple comparison between then and now.

The busy settlements of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and the first half of the eighteenth centuries speak for themselves; the scattered, aimless Indians, the forest-covered towns, and the grass-grown streets are equally eloquent—of a later phase. It seems that the peace of mind that was to follow the expulsion of the Jesuits has been won at some material cost. If it has ever existed there have been remarkably few left to enjoy it.

But it is early days to enter upon such a debatable topic. It is a mistake to speak with too much authority ere one has entered the spot—or even afterwards, since in Misiones the actual ruins themselves are hedged about by a remarkable dearth of historians and antiquarians. Its interest lies primarily

in the fact that it stands as the theatre of the great experiment in civilisation, and secondly, in the wonderful bounty of its natural features that have persisted throughout, regardless as ever of human mutability.

CHAPTER II

AT RAILHEAD

Arrival in Misiones—Railhead—Appearance of the spot—Ultimate destination of the line—Characteristics of the neighbourhood—Pasture and forest—Flowers and swamp—The camp—The amenities of the atmosphere—Sentiments fitting the occasion—Prolific nature—Aspect of the soil—Peculiarities of the red earth—Its characteristics in dry and wet weather—A native hut and its inhabitants—Settlers from the Far North—Guaraní labourers—Noisy methods of toil—A tiny encampment—Peace of the spot—*Yerba maté*—Manner of its partaking—A Misiones wagon—Curious aspect of the vehicle—A comprehensive goad—Pictorial effect of the whole—Evening at the camp—Sights and sounds—Nocturnal passers-by—The amusements of the hour—The dynamite wagon and the paymaster's car—Unwelcome neighbours—Differing notions of safety—Misplaced chivalry—The sentry—The coolness of the nights—Early morning in Misiones—Tacurú stone—Admirable building material—Method of treatment—An enforced absence of test—The Jesuits and the stone.

WE have arrived in Misiones. I have no intention of announcing the fact with an undue degree of ostentation. Many others have been in the habit of entering the territory before ourselves, in a more poetic and leisurely fashion, moreover. For we are neither fatigued nor saddle-weary. We have come by train. Thus if the opening sentence sound like a blare of trumpets, the fault lies in the ear of the reader.

Railhead here is very like railhead all the world over, so far as its industrial attributes are concerned. There are tents and shanties, buildings in the course of erection, piles of timber and iron, and gangs of men labouring at embankments and cuttings. They are making a bed for the metals that are destined to extend to the Alto Paraná River, and, linked by a railway ferry, to cut through the Paraguayan forests upon the further side as far as the town of Asuncion itself.

All about are the rolling hills, covered in parts by forest patches, and the valleys, through which flow the idyllic, verdure-shaded streams. The greater part of Misiones, by the way, is densely wooded throughout, but just here the pastureland and timber are divided into alternate sections, the greater area of the district being open. Upon the ground is a profusion of blossom, and the low-lying swamps are covered with their own species of flowers. The camp is a genial enough spot; but its precincts are necessarily almost exactly similar to those of any other camp. Undoubtedly the most profitable method of spending the time is to take a preliminary stroll in the neighbourhood.

The atmosphere of the place is one of the first attributes that impresses itself most strongly upon the visitor to Misiones. Notwithstanding the subtropical sun, the air of the uplands here is filled with a sparkle

of freshness that is purely delightful. It is as though some beneficent influence had filtered away all discomfort from the hot rays of the sun. It is our grim boast that in no other country but England are the merits of climatic conversation properly understood. Yet there are few who can venture into this remote spot without refraining from a cry of admiration at this really notable feature of the district. One feels inclined to imitate the shout of the first leader to set foot on the shores of the River Plate: "*Que Buenos Aires!*" But it would be a waste of breath, since it is most unlikely that the inhabitants would take the trouble to name a town after the exclamation, as did the *conquistadores*.

Nature is too prolific here for the railway labourers to disturb anything more than their immediate surroundings. At a distance of some few hundred yards from the track the country extends itself as peacefully as though no iron road were being laid in the neighbourhood. Occasionally sounds the dull roar of the blastings three or four miles to the front of railhead, nothing more.

Where no shrubs, flowers, and grasses exist, the aspect of the soil is red. It is as warm in tint, in fact, as the reddest of Devon earth. The colour is characteristic of a vast region, and is a familiar sight in the uplands of Paraguay and of Southern Brazil. It is not astonishing, therefore, that it should be met

with here, since we are on a territorial peninsula that is connected with Argentina only in the west. To the south and east extends Brazil, while the lands of Paraguay come down to the Alto Paraná River on the north. Had you an elbow trajectory of a few leagues you might toss the usual biscuit with ease into either of the neighbouring Republics.

This red soil has well-defined peculiarities of its own. Under favourable climatic conditions it is fertile, picturesque, and pleasant to the eye. An extended spell of drought or rain, however, brings to the surface the malicious qualities that are latent within it. Under the influence of the first it dissolves itself into a fine red powder that floats everywhere and penetrates all things with a calm and certain persistence, such as even the mosquito might envy but never successfully imitate. But in this it is not alone. There are few countries in the southern continent that do not suffer from these floating clouds of earth. In mere volume, moreover, the dust of Misiones will not stand comparison for one moment with that of the alluvial districts.

It is a downpour of rain that flogs the red soil into an exhibition of what it is really capable of doing. Then the earth is turned into the richest of paste that clings to the boot, or to any other object with which it is brought into contact, with a tenacity the determination of which is almost incredible in mere soil.



FIRST TRAIN ENTERING APOSTOLES STATION.



PAYMASTER'S COACH AT APOSTOLES
STATION.



GENERAL MANAGER'S COACH AT
APOSTOLES.

If the dust of Misiones is like mosquitoes, the mud of the country resembles leeches—or creditors, or malaria, or an unripe apple, in fact, any object that refuses to be shaken off. But none of these considerations need affect us at the present moment. Just at present the earth is in its happy medium state. It is firm to the foot, and prolific of great ants that drag their ludicrously swollen bodies to and fro.

Beneath a tall lapacho tree, innocent as yet of foliage, but whose every twig glows with the brilliant pink of its blossom, is a tiny native hut. The establishment is modest in the extreme. The low walls are of the ordinary red soil of the land, sun-baked and set, and a thatching of coarse reed suffices for the roof. A copper-tinted woman is visible within the small interior, handling crude cooking implements in a leisurely fashion. Just without the threshold are two dusky brats in a refreshing state of nature. They are clawing at the soil with more aimless motions than those of the few scraggy hens that surround them, while near by a mongrel dog fans its ear with ceaseless industry. With the notable exception of the dog, the scene contains all the elements of peace and of the picturesque; but there, I think, the merits of the spot begin and end.

The next dwelling is situated a couple of miles farther on. Although no larger, it is of an entirely different type from the first. There is wood as well

as mud in the walls here, and the structure is white-washed, and surmounted by a roof of elaborate thatch. There are youngsters here too, some arrayed in grimy shirts, others in the costume of the bath. In all but the matter of clothes, or the want of them, they differ entirely from the ordinary children of the land. Fair-haired and blue-eyed, they are obviously from the north, as is the grown man near by who is worrying the soil with a leisurely hoe.

These folk are Poles, as a matter of fact, and the hut represents one of the outposts of a large Polish colony that has settled itself firmly in the neighbourhood. The children stare curiously; the man salutes with a deep humility that is unusual in the Republic. Indeed, a metaphorical ocean lies between these people and their native neighbours. But no more of them for the present, since they are worthy of a separate later chapter.

Onwards through the sparkling air, past the flowers and butterflies, and over the red soil to a spot behind a forest patch, whence comes the din of human labour. A gang of wild-looking men in broad trousers and flaming shirts and scarves are working at an embankment over which the train will run one day, and that very soon. They are plying their tools in rather noisy content, and in a spirit of jovial independence that manifests itself in an outbreak of yells and shouts whenever anything occurs ever so

slightly out of the usual routine. The stone of which the embankment is formed is of quite another order than that of the Tacurú. The cross sections of almost every block are bright green with the tinge of copper, and at rare intervals a sheet of the solid metal is exposed. It is possible, I suppose, that the time may come when these deposits may prove of commercial value. But at present attention is centred upon the railway line—the main line to Paraguay!

A couple of trollies, running on temporary lines, are starting on their way back towards rail-head. It is possible to obtain a ride in one of these, and an extra wild whoop on the part of the *peones* marks the departure. The way lies past railhead, and, upon the permanent metals now, to an idyllic spot where stands a small solitary tent to which an arbour of branches has been added. The tiny encampment is situated on a little plateau of level land, bounded on one side by a forest patch, on the other by a rippling stream.

Here lives an English engineer whose few wants are tended by an ancient, brown, and wrinkled woman. The new embankment and freshly laid rails are invisible from the spot. There is nothing here to remind one that any such prosaic objects have been thumped and clanged and hammered into the utter peace of the spot. Above floats a black-and-white hawk, a great handsome creature with

long, divided tail ; nearer the earth are the humming-birds, their brilliant little bodies showing intermittently as they poise before the blossoms, while upon the surface itself of the soil and stones are the lizards.

Save for the small encampment there is little else just here in the way of life. From the kitchen—which is large, being any portion of the country surrounding the tent—rises a thin column of smoke ; for sticks are burning, and the water is in the act of being boiled for the infusion of the national drink, the *yerba maté*. Presently the gourds are brought out, filled with the Paraguayan tea, and provided with the tubes through which the liquid is drawn into the mouth.

Seeing that this spot is the abode of a foreigner, the visitor is proffered a gourd for his own particular use. Were one among true *paisanos* a pleasant insult of the kind would be inconceivable. In the humbler native society the gourd with its tube would be passed round from hand to hand and from mouth to mouth. The custom is essentially sociable : an attempt to escape from its observance would cause dire offence. Yet I must frankly admit to an infinite preference for one gourd apiece. There is no necessity then to crush down one's ocular and imaginative senses, without which drastic temporary annihilation this other feat of common drinking would be well-nigh impossible.

When the *maté* bowls have been sipped dry, and news and experiences exchanged—the engineer is anxious regarding the affairs of the outer world, while the traveller is concerned merely with the doings of this small corner—we may stroll again, away from the railway line this time, across the grass tufts and the flowers until we arrive at the spot where a road winds its way across the country. The road is wide ; but like all other roads in the land its merits begin and end with its width. Along its scored surface is advancing a vehicle of surprising aspect.

The thing is a great wagon balanced on a single pair of heavy and almost solid timber wheels. From the front of its rounded, thatched roof projects a goad, ornamented at intervals with tufts of ostrich feathers, and of such a length that it has assumed a graceful droop, as it poises above the backs of the three yoke of oxen who lumber along with the stolid force of their species. At the first glimpse the instrument appears like a cross between a complicated spear and a fishing-rod. As a matter of fact, its use is simple enough. At the extreme end is a point which is stuck at will into the leading pair of oxen, while to a spot midway in the length of the main shaft is attached a triangle ending in a dart, so placed as to stir the energies of the middle pair. As to the wheelers, they receive special attention from a short goad which the driver manipulates

independently of the other. Thus the management of the arrangement calls for no small degree of skill. Without previous practice probably none but an experienced piano-player or typist would succeed in a policy of pin-pricks that should materially affect all three pairs of the animals simultaneously.

The appearance of the vehicle is bizarre to a degree. The tramping oxen and the quaint, swaying cart would in themselves be sufficiently remarkable. As it is, they serve merely as complements to the pictorial effect of the great goad with its barbaric feather decorations that juts out from the roof to sway above the team. The thing is a relic of the past. Generations ago it was this style of wagon that abounded fairly widely over the northern districts of the River Plate Provinces. Now it is only in such out-of-the-way regions as Misiones that the picturesque sight is to be met with. It is typical of the Territory ; but its days are assuredly numbered.

The sun has long ago sunk in a final blaze of variegated fire. The noises and clamour of the day's labour at railhead have died away in sympathy. Such sounds as continue coincide fittingly with the change from the full glowing colours of the sun to the silver and neutral tints that the half-moon has shed over the land. From where the roofs of the tents stand out in clear white from the grey mystery of their lower canvas comes the soft thrumming of a

guitar, varied now and again by the cruder complaints drawn from a concertina on the rack. Then there is the inevitable orchestra of the frogs, and the occasional distant low of a wakeful ox. They are sounds that add to the peace of the night, much as a beauty spot on a lady's cheek serves to accentuate the beauty of the surrounding skin.

At rare intervals the tranquillity is broken in another manner, thoroughly and crudely shattered by a shrilly raucous explosion of barks. They occur in the neighbourhood of the main tent when a figure, head and shoulders thickly swathed about and muffled, goes padding softly by on bare feet. In the mysterious and rather ghostly forms the dogs seem to scent a menace. On each occasion they hurl a savage volley of threats at the passer, who proceeds on his way in contemptuous indifference.

The precautions of the dogs are superfluous. At least in nine cases out of ten one is certain of it, in the tenth one hopes so. These shadowy figures are only those of the labourers in sociable mood passing from one shelter to another. They have been discussing many matters—why should they not?—and they are on their way to discuss many more. You may see the forms of a group here and there illuminated by the faint beams of a crude lamp, about which they squat.

Who can tell the theme of their talk? It may

be concerned with the incidents of the past day ; it may have for its subject a *capataz*, whose want of consideration calls for shrugs on the part of some, dark looks on the part of others. It may touch upon the quaint manners and customs of the *gringo* engineers, in which case a chuckle or two may confidently be anticipated, blended with an expression of lordly contempt. It may rise high in argument when the respective merits of two guitar players are brought into question, or it may swell to an equal height in the voluptuous enjoyment of a scandal. For in many respects the *peon* here is much the same as folk elsewhere. In the matter of scandal the difference lies merely in the details. But this difference is marked. The *peon* is a child of nature : he leaves nothing to the imagination.

Just in front of the main tent stand a covered railway wagon and a private car. Their outlines are softened by the night ; the rails that support their wheels are invisible from the distance of a yard or two. Just now, in common with the rest of the scene that has sprung up so abruptly to offend the surrounding nature, they have been lent an unreal glamour. They might be small houses rooted in the soil. Lounging in the neighbourhood is a cloaked figure, kepi on head, the moonlight striking a beam of light from the barrel of the rifle in his hand.

He is a police trooper, set to guard both wagons.

The contents of the one are just about as precious and as perilous as those of the other. The first is laden with dynamite ; the second is the paymaster's private car. It holds the weekly wages of all these hundreds of men, to be doled out with a certain number of fitting precautions on the morrow.

Truth to tell, one might have more pleasant companions. And, by the irony of fate, they have been hauled just here within a few yards of the main tent for the sake of safety. For the sake of their *own* safety, *bien entendu* ! It is this way. A small party of *peones*, in a reckless mood, might take it into their heads to loot the cash, were it stored near a less responsible place. So far so good. But this is not all. If these same *peones* in a fit of horseplay should take to blazing away their revolvers at nothing in particular, a chance bullet might penetrate the dynamite car. Then the silver night would see a sight and hear a sound that would astonish the earth from the Alto Paraná River to the Uruguay.

That is why the dynamite wagon has been brought to cast its shadow across the entrance of the tent. To one not in the employ of the railway the procedure savours of a chivalry towards a mere explosive that is altogether out of place. The conviction of the ordinary man is perfectly clear on the point. A comforting interval of space should grow larger in exactly the same proportion as the risk of

an explosion is magnified. This is not the theory of the engineers. Thus we have a thing of a thousand bombs nestling in such intimate association that one could almost cuddle it from the bunk within the tent. One can only hope that these shadowy forms that flit by now and again will remain as shadowy and silent as they are now. There is nothing like the loom of a dynamite wagon for breeding thoughts of peace.

No anxieties of the kind disturb the sentry. The worthy fellow is wrapped in the easy meditation of his race, a reverie that may be concerned with so much or so little ; it is impossible to tell from outward appearances. Still, he is a comforting sight. He is the official intervener between the general public and annihilation. When the last light has died away in the camp, and the song of the frogs alone remains of all the noises to beat upon the air, he is there still, plainly visible through the opening of the tent. If nothing happens it will be worth while giving him a glass of *caña* in the morning. In the meanwhile, let sleep in the shadow of the dynamite wagon destroy these fancies of the night !

Sleep in the uplands of Misiones is a very pleasant thing. The extremities of the phase, that is to say, how far the quality of actual slumber can vary, must be left to the determination of a more philosophic brain than mine. Put with

unpleasant crudeness, the test of sleep, like that of whisky, lies in the condition of the morning mind and mouth. In these respects Misiones leaves nothing to be desired. Never was there a more elastic air. Once freed from the heavy oppression of the sunrays, it bounds up into cool and sparkling life; then, as the small hours are approached, it pricks and bites with a chilly force that would astonish the daylight. It is a queer medley this: the full glamour of the tropics when the sun shines, and a pile of blankets on the body at night!

You may start out in the morning some time conveniently soon after the break of day, and you will find Misiones at its very best. You will stroll by the edge of forests, going from the early sunlight into shadow, then back into the growing warmth again, through grasses, past great stretches of reeds where the lofty pink swamp-flowers grow, and, in fact, past the thousand and one beauties of the place, great and small.

Here, on a hill, is a curious outcrop of red-brown stone. Now you may pass this stone by, and think very little of the matter; but this stone, for all that, has played an important part in the history of Misiones. It is the Tacurú stone, and Tacurú, in the Guaraní speech, signifies mushroom. So, at all events, I am told, and, being ignorant of all Guaraní, have to accept the statement as it comes. The name

is appropriate enough, since the mounds in many cases do undoubtedly bear a certain resemblance to the fungus. But this is a minor peculiarity of the material.

It was from this Tacurú that all the Jesuit towns in the neighbourhood were built. According to all accounts it is a remarkable stone. When first quarried from out of the earth it is strangely soft and yielding. So docile is it indeed in these early days that it will permit itself to be shaped into blocks by means of an ordinary axe. In a short while the contact with the outer world hardens its tender substance, and it becomes as hard and inflexible as are the great fragments of the ruins in the neighbouring forests.

As I have said, there is no reason why I should doubt the rather surprising merits of the stone, since they were related to me by several persons of unquestionable authority. But I have never been able to put the matter to a personal test. Whenever I was in the neighbourhood of the Tacurú no axe happened to be at hand, and when I chanced to be near the axes the inconsiderate stone was far away! Owing to this unfortunate state of affairs the opportunity slipped. In any case, a proof of its permanence is exhibited in the present condition of the stone in the ruins.

A convenient stone this. Doubtless the old

Jesuits ascribed its presence to divine mercy, and gave thanks for the ideal building material that lay to their hand. Perhaps, after all, it has justified its existence in the place. If it serves for nothing else, it stands in the form of monuments of a past age, and, whether prone or upright, it will remain to serve in the same way for many centuries, I hope, since, as things are, it could not fulfil a nobler purpose.

CHAPTER III

THE NORTHERN PEON

Misiones dwellers—Aspects of the rank and file—Religion replaced by superstition—A childlike temperament—The native sense of humour—Uncomfortable methods of its expression—Irresponsible marksmen—Original attributes of the race—The Indian in his primitive condition—Improvements in the people—Enthusiastic Jesuit testimony—Present condition of the peon—Physical compensation for mental atrophy—Proofs of animal vitality—An unsophisticated labourer—The cost of an experiment—A marvellous cure—A grim incident—Fighting to a finish—A double tragedy—The northern peon and the gaucho—Differences between the two—Various habits and customs—An advertisement of honesty—The Guaraní whoop—Its resemblance to that of the North American braves—The yell as part of a day's routine—An easy form of amusement.

THE rank and file of the dwellers in Misiones is represented by an order of humanity the nature of which is perhaps unusually contradictory in its elements. The majority, although Argentine blood has entered into their composition from time to time, are the lineal descendants of the Indians of the Jesuit settlements, and in many respects the temperament of the race remains much as it was when the missionary Fathers first entered into an untrodden land.

In external appearance the average of these more

humble inhabitants is by no means unprepossessing. Their stature and physique are well enough. Of a light copper complexion, their faces are the reverse of hirsute; indeed, a beard or moustache on the countenance of a true Misiones dweller is a distinct rarity. The majority, moreover, have retained a certain number of their old customs, and speak the native Guaraní in preference to Spanish.

Such of the religious life of their forefathers as has come down to them has assumed the form of superstition pure and simple. Feasts and ceremonies are observed from time to time, but the significance of these is principally confined to performances of dancing and drinking, at both of which functions the Misiones *peon*, when in the mood, is no mean adept.

The temperament of that interesting person, indeed, partakes largely of that of the child. His normal moments of careless, good-natured ease, and his rarer spasms of anger are both exhibited in a fashion that is sufficiently juvenile in its irresponsibility. The characteristics of the Guaraní race, whether in Paraguay or here in Misiones, are much the same. The *peon* here possesses a certain sense of humour. But its ebullitions are generally appreciated more highly by himself than by others.

An instance of this species of humour may be given in some episodes that were sufficiently marked to cause diplomatic representations to

Paraguay on the part of Argentina. On the stretches of the Paraguay River that separate the two republics are wont to cruise the official launches of the Argentine Public Works Department, in order to survey and comment upon the vagaries of the continuously altering depths and shallows of the mutable stream.

Now the sight of these graceful little launches was altogether too much for the Paraguayan *peon*. Their presence tickled his sense of the ridiculous to a degree that made it impossible for him to leave the vessels in peace. So, when he happened to be riding along the bank in the neighbourhood of one of them, and had nothing better to do, he would take a pot-shot at the craft with rifle or revolver, and then, his high spirits refreshed, would proceed on his way.

Needless to say, not the faintest spark of animosity underlay the action. Is a schoolboy's heart filled with bitterness when he twangs his catapult in the direction of an unsuspecting sparrow? It was something to do, and it was amusing; nothing more! So far as I am aware, none of the bullets ever found a billet; but the consequences might well have been serious, for all that.

If the humour of this northern dweller is crude, it is not to be wondered at when the people from whom he has been evolved are taken into consideration.



TEMPORARY BRIDGE AT BOUNDARY OF CORRIENTES AND MISIONES.



AGUAPEY BRIDGE, ARGENTINE N.E. RAILWAY.

According to the old Jesuit historian, Father Charlevoix, the remote ancestors of the *peon* had remarkably little to recommend them when fate first brought them into touch with the white man. They were, he says, "naturally dull, cruel, and inconstant; treacherous, and excessively voracious, and cannibals; given to drunkenness, void of foresight or precaution, even in the most indispensable concerns of life, lazy and indolent beyond the power of expression; that, except few whom the love of plunder or revenge has rendered furious rather than brave, most of them are arrant cowards . . ."

Now this is scant praise. It is probable enough that the good Father in his endeavour to illustrate the contrast in native life before and after the advent of the Jesuits has not treated the aboriginal faults with too light a pen, yet there is no doubt whatever that the main facts are accurate enough. The Indian in his primitive condition was not a pleasant person to meet.

Since the period of their primitive life these people have undergone many vicissitudes. Caught up in the forward wave of the Jesuit colonisation, their progress in industry and civilisation was continuous for some two centuries. Their mental advance, it is true, lagged behind the material strides of the nation. Nevertheless the improvement in their morality was marked, and the sense of discipline

and veneration became a notable feature in the race. When once part and parcel of their flock, the testimony of the Jesuits concerning the virtues of their converts becomes enthusiastic.

Of their new condition the same authority, Father Charlevoix, says: "The missionaries have succeeded in entirely extirpating from this republick certain vices, drunkenness especially, to which the Indians incline; and inspire them with so great a delicacy of conscience, that at present they rarely bring any but the slightest faults to the tribunal of penance. Don Pedro Faxardo, bishop of Buenos Aires, wrote to the King of Spain that he did not believe there was a single mortal sin committed in any of these towns in a twelvemonth. They present themselves, however, before this tribunal with such sentiments of compunction that they seldom leave it without dissolving into tears."

Here we have the picture of the later state, a trifle coloured, but by no means inaccurate. Hand in hand with the awakened consciences—or with the manufactured sentiments, as others allege—went a certain degree of culture and craftsmanship. The Indians carved wood and stone, understood the printer's art, illuminated manuscripts, and performed countless intricate tasks of an imitative rather than a creative nature. This was the high-water stage of their prosperity.

That this civilisation had been grafted rather than imbued is evident from the happenings that succeeded the departure of the Jesuits. Then the laboriously contrived structure toppled over as rapidly as a pack of cards. It is true that the causes of the fall did not altogether arise from within. But, even had they been left to their own devices, it is impossible to believe that these Indians, in whom even such faint initiative as they might have possessed had been discouraged in favour of discipline and blind obedience, could ever have kept the flag of state flying. As it was, they underwent an unsuccessful attempt at secular government, and then were enlisted wholesale to take part in the civil wars that devastated the countries of the River Plate. But with this I am dealing at greater length in the latter portion of the book.

So the Indian fell half-way down the ladder of progress he had been made to mount, an abrupt and giddy descent! Until recent years his country, in an industrially strategic sense, has lain at the back of beyond, a remote and little-known colony of Central Argentina, as it were. He has done that which seemed best to him, and the result has been a renewed cultivation of strong liquor, and a somewhat undue licence in matters of love and strife.

It is only when brought face to face with the type of Indian who now inhabits the historical districts

that the true immensity of the Jesuit work can be gauged. All evidence of such intellectual stirrings as the Fathers evoked from his ancestor has long since died away. He is a crude child of nature, who takes life in great gulps—when he can find the where-withal with which to gulp! As is the way of nature, he is compensated physically for this mental atrophy. There are few dwellers in more civilised centres who can afford not to envy his physical well-being.

Occasionally he affords amazing proofs of the flow of animal vitality that dwells within him. When I was at the Camp more than one instance of this occurred. There was a *peon*, for one, freshly caught and completely ignorant of the ways and forces of railway construction, whose enthusiasm cost him dear. Seeing a stone-laden trolley gliding slowly backwards along the rails he endeavoured to bring the thing to a halt by means that were heroic in their incredible ignorance. He placed his foot in front of one of the iron wheels, and, of course, had the member crushed like an eggshell for his pains.

A white man's life would have been endangered from the shock alone. But the *peon* is built of quaint and stolid material. An hour after the accident he was limping about, trailing behind him one foot in bloodstained bandages. Resisting all the endeavours that were made to urge him into hospital, his case was considered perilous by those ignorant of the

nature of his race. Nevertheless the foot, although it never regained its original shape, healed in a surprisingly short time, and the working arrangements of the man's anatomy became almost as efficient as before.

Some days before this a far grimmer incident had occurred, which threw a lurid light on the warlike, rather than the industrial, propensities of the *peon*. An affray broke out between two of the men. Whether its cause was a woman, drink, or a game of chance, I know not. That it must have been one of the three is certain enough, since the mental workings of the *peon* are not so far removed from those of the cruder moments of his white brother. In Misiones there may be a few other things to be lived for; but these three alone are worthy of a serious fight.

In this case the struggle had an even more ghastly end than usual. After a certain number of passes with the knives, one of the fighters received a slash in the abdomen that disembowelled him. His opponent turned away, in the certainty that the combat was over. His incautious move cost him his life. The other, holding his wound together as an ordinary person might compress a broken paper bag, sprang after him, gave out a fatal thrust in turn, and then fell, dying, upon his dead opponent. The *peon* may be irresponsible, but he can be in deadly earnest at times.

It must not be gathered from this, of course, that Misiones is a land of unlimited knife-thrusts and murder. It is true that up to the present the Territory has remained largely without the pale of the main Argentine civilisation, and that the Republic as a whole can no more be judged by the happenings in this far north-eastern corner than can the British Islands by episodes in the Falkland Islands or some similar distant spot. Certainly the *peones* here have no clearer conception of Buenos Aires than of London or Paris. It has been said of the African that he is a child with the passions of a man. In this respect he resembles the Misiones *peon*, who, by the way, has very little in common either in race or in manners with the true gauchos of the plains farther south. The gaucho is one of the most dignified beings that walks the earth; his voice is low, his gestures few, and his general deportment breathes an impressive calm. Should his temper rise, there is an explosion, almost inevitably followed by an accident; but the occasions for this have now become rare.

The Misiones *peon*, on the other hand, is filled to the brim with boisterous spirits. He will bandy chaff to and fro in a free and easy fashion that the reserve of the gaucho would never permit. If he finds himself ordinarily content, he refuses to accept the condition in silence. He feels it his duty to let his neighbours know that all is well with him,

and how can he do this better than by making a noise?

Many customs he has, of course, in common with the gauchos. His costume is similar, for one thing; he will imbibe his *yerba maté* in the same fashion, and, if he be given to posing, he will tie back the brim of his sombrero from the forehead just as the gaucho does. It is an advertisement of honesty, this, a proof that the wearer of the up-tilted sombrero is not afraid to be looked direct in the eye. In actual life the proof goes for very little, since this appeal of the open countenance is naturally most employed by those who stand in greatest need of some such outward token.

It would be strange were there not much in common between the gaucho and his northern neighbour when the many peculiarities are considered that are shared alike by all the tribes of both North and South America. The Misiones *peon* himself furnishes a striking instance of this. I have already referred to the whoop that he emits on every possible occasion. Now, in common with quite a number of others, I have never seen the Red Indian braves of the North. Not on their native soil, that is to say, since those imported for the special purpose of the London Exhibitions may, or may not, be fierce in private life: stage ardour must necessarily be largely a matter of salary. At the same time, from conver-

sations with those who should know something of the Northern Red Indian, and from descriptions of the latter's vocal efforts, I have very little doubt that the respective whoops of the latter and of the Misiones man are twin brothers of sound.

In the case of the Red Indian, I believe, the yell is eloquent in its grim or festal expression ; in Misiones it expresses nothing at all. It will occur in moments of excitement, it is true ; but it appears to form part of the day's routine as well. Thus a *peon* may be walking in the neighbourhood of the camp, when the reflection may strike him that it is some while since he has made a really satisfactory noise. Then out will come his favourite wail, rising to a shrill note, and sinking down the scale again into silence. Should companions find themselves within range of the call they will answer it with gusto. There the incident ends. Should none be in the neighbourhood, the whoop will die away unanswered. In either case no harm is done, save to the nerves of a petulant stranger who may ask himself with self-centred curiosity why such things should be. He has really no right to question anything of the kind. The main fact is that it amuses the *peon*, and the country is the legitimate home of this dusky person, after all.



VIEW OF ASUNCION FROM THE RIVER.



THE GALERÍA.



TRAMS AT ASUNCION, PREVIOUS TO ELECTRIC INSTALLATION.

CHAPTER IV

THE GALERA

Arrival of a train at railhead—Importance of the advent—The *pulperia*—Aspect of the country inn—The shelter of the ombú tree—Frequenters of the inn—The *galera*—The lading of the rural coach—Arrival of the horses—A multitudinous team—The vehicle and its passengers—The contact of civilisation with the world beyond—Jovial contempt—The start of the *galera*—Episodes accompanying the event—Remarks on the game of *Taba*—A coming storm—Tropical rain—The notes of the drops—The *galera* in the distance—Career of the vehicle—A sudden halt—Shipwrecked in a mud-hole—The plight of the passengers—A desperate remedy—The resumption of the journey—Time, and its varying importance.

RAILHEAD has blossomed out into one of those periodical spasms of life that is connected with actual traffic rather than with the manufacture of the line. An engine, followed by a short, heterogeneous train of vehicles has puffed imposingly into sight. Having proceeded soberly to where the buildings cluster about the present end of the route, it has halted, and has discharged its load of labourers, officials, and, as chance will have it, a stray passenger or two of an adventurous turn of mind.

The advent of the train sends a material wave of sensation throughout the countryside. It brings many objects of interest—letters, friends, cigarettes,

provisions, and much beyond that goes to imbue fresh life in the dwellers at the Camp. Should you an hour or so later stroll some distance over the hill that flanks the temporary settlement, you will come to a small knot of buildings that sat firmly on the land many decades before the camp at railhead was built or thought of. But the influence of the train has permeated to the spot.

Here the *galera* is all but ready for the start. Moreover, the departure of the rural coach in this far north-eastern corner of Argentina is a matter for no little concern. No everyday affair, since it occurs but twice in the course of a week, it has attracted a small knot of spectators to the *pulperia* or country inn that serves as posting-house. The building itself, low, square, and unadorned, is a typical hostelry of the remote districts, and its mud walls serve admirably as a place of repose for the backs of the local spectators. It is complete in every respect, provided even with its sheltering ombú tree; for no inn or private hut worthy of the name would be content without the companionship of the tree that an Argentine loves as deeply as an Englishman his oak. It must be admitted that no comparison is possible between the staunchness of the two. Utterly worthless in its timber, the ombú is treasured for its shade alone. It is that particular bounty that has caused the tree to be sung and praised until it has

obtained sanctuary within the innermost temples of true Argentine sentiment and poetry.

At the *pulperia* just now the ombú is performing its allotted task as faithfully as ever. The sun is blazing fiercely downwards, and the northern landscape of hill, swamp, and forest patches, newly washed by late spring rains, is quivering beneath its heat. But the *peones* who lean against the inn are within the cool shade of the branches. A wild, happy-go-lucky lot these, differing as widely from the men of the Pampa as does the landscape from the treeless plains of the south. Free and unrestrained in gesture, laughing and mocking to their hearts' content, they seem as children when compared with the grimly silent men of the plains. Yet their knives loom largely in their belts—dangerous playthings when in the hands of these children, for children indeed they are, in all their finery of coloured shirts, and trousers that are in reality divided skirts.

The main activities of the place are centred upon the *galera* itself. The neighbourhood of the motionless coach has resounded with shouts and the trampling of hoofs. There have been pullings and heavings with rope, leather, and hide, and now seven horses, in two rows, stand attached to the rural coach. But the team is not yet complete. In spite of the present sunshine, report has it that the mudholes lie deep in the dips of the land. A couple of mounted gauchos

have sped away over the undulating pastures, and two more horses, driven to the spot, come thudding up over the tussocky grass. To one unfamiliar with the peculiarities of a *galera* it might be difficult to conceive how room is to be found in the team for these reinforcements. But the capacity of the coach in this respect is bounded only by the number of horses and lengths of rope that are available in the neighbourhood. Thus the two new arrivals are attached to the conveyance in the simplest fashion, and take their place among the rest. The swollen team of nine is ready for the road.

Not so the *galera*. Luggage is still being piled upon the roof of the quaint structure, with its dark body, brightly painted upper-works, and its dome-like erection in front that rises to protect the driver's seat. Composed of an astonishing variety and pattern of bags, sacks, and trunks, the mound has increased until its bulk seems to rival that of the coach upon which it rests. When the last of the impedimenta has been laboriously hoisted, a man with a waterproof sheet clambers up in a perilous ascent to the topmost heights, and when the kindly covering has been affixed to conceal the heterogeneous heap of baggage the aspect of the finished turn-out is at once quaintly majestic and imposingly cumbrous. Notwithstanding, its destined passengers have been surveying the *galera* and the method of its loading with ill-concealed

doubt and apprehension. Three townsmen in clothes of strictly modern cut, they are obviously ill at ease in this remote corner, to which some cynical fate has wafted them. From their appearance it is likely enough that they are pioneer commercial travellers in the full career of a reckless plunge into new and unknown fields. Anxious for information concerning the lonely road that lies before them, they have fraternised with the gauchos to the full extent that lay in their power. They have exchanged cigarettes, have drunk the *maté* tea from the same silver tube as the rest, and have made the usual overtures by means of which the hesitating stranger endeavours to propitiate the acknowledged lords of the soil. But the sympathies of the dark-faced men have been hard to win. The wearers of skirts and many-hued garments have laughed and jested, it is true. Nevertheless the enjoyment of the wit has been confined to their own particular company, for its shafts have been directed against the men in dark coats and tight trousers—horseless strangers, flabby of body, and ignorant of the *Campo*, worthy therefore of scarcely concealed contempt!

But the end of these minor trials has drawn near. The driver of the vehicle has lounged out from the *pulperia*, and has climbed upwards to his official seat beneath the painted dome. The man is garbed in the ordinary gaucho costume, the brim of his sombrero

tied back in front as a proof that his countenance is open and that his eyes fear the full scrutiny of no man—a method of claiming honesty that is general here, whatever may be the actual disposition of the maker. Convinced that the moment of departure has actually arrived, the three passengers have mounted the steps in haste, and have passed through the door at the back to their places within. There was no need for haste. The driver has many last words to say. For a quarter of an hour or so sententious remarks and badinage are bandied between him and the group of his friends below.

At length the driver has gathered up the confused tangle of leather and rope, the lines of which go out like a maze of tributary rivers on a map, each to find the mouth of its own horse. A tense moment of expectancy succeeds the lengthy period of waiting beneath the ombú tree. It is broken by an altogether unexpected outbreak of din and clamour. Without warning, the crack of the driver's long whip explodes like a gunshot. Ere its echoes have died away the whole company of gaucho spectators has given out a volley of the wild whoops without which no event of importance can be satisfactorily consummated. The *galera* is off! There is a creaking of timber and a straining of iron as the vehicle swings round abruptly on two wheels. More whip-cracks, another outburst of whoops, and the horses are fairly in their

stride. Away goes the *galera*, helter-skelter down the hill, its lofty body bumping remorselessly over the tussocks, while three anxious faces within are jerked to and fro in unwilling harmony with the jolts. In a short while the nine galloping horses, spread out like a fan, have swung round a rising shoulder of land. The *galera* has gone! It has taken with it the life of the place; for half an hour after its departure the *pulperia* is as lonely as a place of the dead.

So back to the Camp again, unless you would await the advent of some chance stranger, and challenge him to a game of *Taba*. But, although played with the knee-bone of an ox, it is none the less immoral a game, this, than those played with lesser pieces of bone. The pastime, in fact, is nothing more or less than a picturesque form of pitch-and-toss. The rounded side of the bone stands for "heads," its hollow one for "tails." Except in the case of the native mind *Taba* is apt to pall after a while. In the case of the native the result is too frequently exciting to a degree, as is occasionally testified by bad blood freely spent. It is as well to leave *Taba* alone.

The return is effected only just in time. Climatic conditions here are delightful, but not invariably monotonous. There is menace in the air just now, and the journey ends with a run to the tent. From beneath its sheltering canvas one may peer out in comfort.

The blue of the sky has become obscured by heavy masses of grey cloud. The ominous gloom has rolled overhead to the accompaniment of lightning flashes and dull peals of thunder. The noisy threat, however, has proved no empty one. In Misiones there is seldom a cloud without its watery consequence. There is no doubt that all Nature in the neighbourhood is acutely aware of this. Although a couple of the great, hawklike Carancho birds are scurrying in haste across the grey horizon, the lesser feathered folk are already snugly hidden within their leafy shelters. The flowers are bereft of their nimbus of gorgeous butterflies, and the vicious-looking giant wasp that has been darting in straight lines to and fro through the air has betaken himself to his own particular refuge—probably a tree where the wasp honey is stored. Even the great inch-long ants have ceased to hurry their bodies in brisk aggressiveness over the earth. It is as though the weather-wise creature life of the world here had shortened sail in preparation for the outburst that it knew was imminent.

Then has come the warning breeze, heavily laden with moisture—and then the rain itself! Its advance is as perceptible as that of a host of living beings. The dull grey curtain comes on with a rustling sigh that increases in volume as it advances. A few seconds later it has enveloped the small encampment. Rain such as this has many notes. The great drops



PARAGUAYAN INDIANS AT HOME.



SURVEY CAMP FOR NEW RAILWAY, MISIONES.

are roaring upon the canvas of the tent, striking a sharper, drumlike rattle from the hard, broad leaves of the resounding palms, and belabouring the wet earth itself with stinging, liquid splashes until the red soil churns into new and swelling puddles. The force of the downpour searches every corner of the land, beating with the same indiscriminating zeal upon the fragile blossoms and upon the corpulent backs of the great frogs as they rejoice at the edges of the pools.

An hour later the storm has passed away to bury its rumblings and crashes beneath the horizon that has once again resolved itself into a brilliant and undimmed blue. A short but sharp deluge this—the rearguard of a procession of rains that have recently come and gone. The countryside, freshly washed and glistening, is marked by neither habitation nor human being. The solitude of the spot is not necessarily to be accounted for by the recent storm; it is a not unusual phase of the sparsely populated stretches of rolling hills and woodland. Any reflection on this point, however, is soon disturbed by the appearance of an object that has emerged from behind a shoulder of the country, and that is moving across the level spread of natural meadowland which intervenes between the Camp and a forest belt that separates the small plain from the rising ground beyond.

The *galera*, viewed from this distance, appears to proceed at a crawling pace, although in reality it

is speeding along in right gallant fashion. To the naked eye the sunlight glistens upon yellow paint and upon the white of the tarpaulin that covers the pile of luggage on the roof of the vehicle. By the aid of the glasses the livelier details of the progress become evident. Harnessed to the front of the coach, nine horses are galloping along in a confused but vigorous bunch, the water of the pools spraying upwards in sheets from their hoofs as the cumbrous body of the vehicle itself rocks to and fro in the full flight of its career. The exhilaration of this rapid motion through the surface waters is obvious enough from even this distance. The whip of the driver is waving through the air now, and the speed of the team increases as it gallops down a slight dip in the ground.

Then something has happened. The vehicle has slowed abruptly in its course, and the horses are plunging wildly, first straight ahead, and then to right and left, as the coach is jerked to a halt. For a minute or two the driver's whip is whirling through the air as ceaselessly as a skipping-rope in the hands of a child, while the maddened animals in front surge to and fro in frantic eddies that continue remorselessly restricted in area. Presently the commotion dies away. The horses stand motionless as the movements of the lash cease, and the driver descends reluctantly from his seat. The contest has been

abandoned for the time being. The *galera* is firmly stuck in a mudhole.

The appeal of misfortune, when distant, is unjustly faint. Viewed through glasses at a range of a couple of miles, this drama of arrested progress is curiously impersonal in its effect. The driver and his assistant have evidently conferred together for a long while ere the disconsolate forms of three passengers emerge from the body of the *galera* to join the officials of the expedition. Then, pulling their feet laboriously from the mud, they each seek the least moist spot in the vicinity. There they wait—there is nothing else for them to do. It is a clear case of utter shipwreck on land. A common enough incident of the road in such weather, but none the less disconcerting for that. There is the *galera*, that by now should have sped over the hill and far away, a stationary point in a hopeless calm, reflecting all the while the sun's rays from its paint in a mocking parody of joy.

The sun has risen to its highest point in the heavens, and has already begun to sink when the five forlorn land mariners gather together once again. On this occasion it is evident from the violent gestures of the passengers that they have begun to discover the value of time—a question that no reasonable being would suppose to interest the driver of a *galera*. Nevertheless the argument has undoubtedly borne fruit: for half an hour or so later there is a stir about the

body of the coach. The jehu and his assistant have clambered to the roof. There ensues a cataract of trunks and boxes that, flung from above, strike great splashes of water from the earth as they fall. The act is doubtless the revenge of the driver. The ship is being lightened—at the expense of the passengers, the pathos of whose bearing is not to be mistaken even at this distance. Presently the forms of the horses are struggling desperately forward again, while tiny smokelike clouds mark the explosions of the whip. And this time the cumbrous *galera* lurches slowly forward, gains in impetus, and rushes up in triumph from out of the dip. When the sun has all but sunk there is no more *galera*. Filled again with passengers and luggage, it has climbed the hill until the tiny speck of its body dips over into the horizon. Its passage is rather regrettable, for the landscape has become quite lonely again. And what do four hours either way matter to a *galera*?

CHAPTER V

THE HEN-KILLER

Duties of the youthful official—A specimen of an aboriginal boy—First meeting with Pedro—A minor calamity—The fate of a meal—The battle with the goose—An old-standing feud—Mimic knife-play—Some questions of sport—Fowl-hunting—Incidents of the chase—The *boleadores* in youthful hands—Pedro's career and its possibilities.

ALTHOUGH we called the boy the hen-killer, it did not follow that his sole aim in life was the death of hens. Far from it. His age considered, the duties of the youthful official were comprehensive to a degree. To his lethal function he added those of butler, dish-washer, and general adviser. Beyond these, he was wont to volunteer for the fulfilment of any special task that might appear to him necessary, or possibly enjoyable.

It is probable that the hen-killer had seen eleven or twelve summers. He himself had no strong convictions on the point. His age, moreover, was still too tender for the number of his past years to interest him. For all that I am laying much stress on this aboriginal boy, caught wild, as it were, and brought home to roost amid the pots and pans, for he represented much that is typical of the youth of

Misiones. Pedro was the name by which he was more commonly known ; but it is probable that even this was merely the makeshift for another which had become lost in the dark mystery of his earliest years.

That Pedro was sensible of the full glamour of existence as waged by him was evident from the expression of his open and distinctly attractive copper-coloured face. Explosions of laughter were as frequent in his mouth as the roars of the distant blastings that heralded the advance of the railway line. His inevitable cheeriness, indeed, was wont to extend to occasions that might well have tested severely the equanimity of an older, and, presumably, wiser person.

It was in circumstances such as these that I first set eyes on Pedro. The wonted brilliant sunshine had given way to a grey loom of cloud that was spouting its moisture in torrents down upon the land. Everywhere the red earth had been wrought into a deep, sticky paste of mud, in the midst of which the little corrugated iron building that served as a home-stead and the yet smaller erection of the kitchen stood out as comparative oases.

Preparations for a meal had been completed beneath the verandah—a spot from which a full view was obtained of the kitchen structure of tin and reed, distant some fifty yards. Presently the open doorway of the latter was partially filled by the form of

Pedro. The boy stood there in an attitude of expectancy, as though awaiting the word to start, a broad smile upon his face, and a large dish in his hand, from which the steam arose in comforting volumes from across the watery waste that intervened.

The next moment Pedro was speeding along through the downpour in the full career of his food ministry. He came on his bare feet as though a tape were stretched across the end of the verandah. Had the journey continued as it began, the boy undoubtedly would have distanced any imaginary competitors that might have followed at his heels. But the miniature slopes of the uneven ground were in parts as slippery as ice. Pedro had covered perhaps half the distance when his legs shot from under him, and the instant afterwards he lay sprawling on the soaked ground. Beside him rested the dish, and by the side of this again the steam of the roasted portions of the beef *Asado* was dying away lugubriously beneath its quenching coat of mud.

To some the incident might have proved disconcerting. But the catastrophe amused Pedro even more than it might have done had he viewed it as a spectator. Seated in the mud, one side of his body painted a brick red in contrast to the neutral tint of the other, he gave out peals of laughter that almost drowned the noise of the falling rain. Then, recovering the dish, he retired to whence he had come,

abandoning the beef to its muddy nest. A little later he was slopping across the interval, bearing the next course, and wondering a little why the rest did not share the laughter that still burst from him at intervals.

A later and fuller acquaintanceship with Pedro was developed under happier circumstances. It was not long ere the rain clouds passed away, and brilliant sunshine enveloped the Camp. The sparkle of the air entered the boy's veins. When next I set eyes on him he was engaged in an unofficial task—nothing less than a battle with a gigantic goose.

Both combatants were hissing with equal fervour. The deep-seated fury of the bird undoubtedly came from the heart; the boy's antics were merely imitative outpourings born of the spirit of mischief. The pugilistic tactics of the two differed widely. The goose came on in a series of bristling advances confounded by the artful flank movements of Pedro. It was evident that the bird would gladly have sacrificed the half of his feathers for a really satisfactory nip at Pedro's bare legs. But for that the dusky youngster was too cautious: the boy was endowed with a greater respect for his antagonist than was the bird.

The scene of strife went raging to and fro, the goose making rabid passes with its beak, Pedro feinting and circling rapidly in an endeavour to

reach the rigid white tail. Then the bird gathered itself together for an irresistible rush, and Pedro, retreating, took refuge on the stump of a tree. The situation had been ludicrous enough throughout ; but from this point onwards the attitudes of the antagonists became almost inconceivably grotesque. The strategic advantage now lay with the bird. Pedro, in fact, was treed ; for the goose stood guard at the foot of the stump in precisely the fashion of the intruder-hunting bulldog of the comic papers. Every time that Pedro's foot moved tentatively downward towards the earth it was menaced by a broad, darting beak, and was rapidly withdrawn.

The impatient voice of the cook brought on the climax. Pedro took the risk, and descended. There was a flurry of feathers and dingy trousers on the ground, while the bird lost itself in a delirium of stabbing pecks. The next moment the battle was over. Pedro was hastening away, rubbing his leg. The goose paced to and fro in hysterical triumph, hissing like a steam-engine.

Afterwards I discovered that these combats formed part of the regular routine of the spot. Whether Pedro or the goose would have missed their enjoyment the most, I should not care to say. On some occasions the boy's duties prevented him from emerging as a challenger for an unduly long period. Then the bored goose would endeavour to play the

same game with a lesser domestic fowl—usually with a corpse as a result.

I believe that the only true companion of the savage old goose was its enemy, the boy. Pedro was better provided in the matter of friends. A number of his recreation hours were shared by a couple of other lads, equally dusky in complexion, rather shorter in stature, who hailed from the temporary encampment beneath the trees near by. One of the chief amusements of the trio was knife-play, as practised with sticks instead of the deadly and shining steel. Yet, as the youngsters lunged and parried, there was something grim in the associations of this pastime that not even the laughter and unwearied good-humour of the players could banish. It was hard to prevent the imagination from adding a few more years to the age of each, and from picturing the steel in the place of the wood.

It is possible that all this is a matter of prejudice. The same ideals throughout cannot flourish beneath the palm and beneath the elm. If you would hear a lecture on barbarity listen to an untravelled South American when holding forth on the subject of boxing. He is genuinely horrified at the sight of what we should term a rousing bout. He will go so far as to argue with heartfelt heat that, compared with the battering and degrading process of the fisticuffs, the use of the keen knife is swift, merciful, and dignified. Accord-

ing to him, the knife, when brought to bear after open challenge and in fair fight, is nothing more nor less than a short sword, and it must be accorded the dignity of that legitimate arm of war. There may be something in the claim, more especially as many of the gaucho knives are but little shorter than a sword bayonet. In any case, the mutual contempt of weapons is instructive of the widely differing stand-points of the various races. To extol the steel at the expense of the honest fist is decidedly enough to stagger an Anglo-Saxon.

But all this, branching out from the piece of wood in Pedro's hand, has led the subject away from the boy. And these mock-combats, after all, constituted but a minor item among the more important daily amusements. Of these there was one that ranked far and away above all the rest. It threw the delights of even a stolen gallop into the shade, and in excitement surpassed the very watching of two angry *peones* in dispute. It represented genuine sport, the chase, in fact, and it was from this that the hen-killer derived his name.

The procedure was heralded by the display of no little pomp. After a brief consultation with the cook Pedro would disappear for awhile. Then he would come marching solemnly forward, accompanied by his pair of trusty youthful assistants. On such occasions the leader was accustomed to swing in his

hand the *boleadores*, the most ancient weapon of his race. One of his assistants bore a similar sling and balls; the other was armed merely with a long stick.

In the neighbourhood of the Camp were many hens—hens that possessed an astonishing length of leg and power of speed. The advent of the trio thus equipped was a matter of considerable importance to these birds; a fact that the foolish creatures never seemed to suspect until the dusky boys were well in their midst. On such occasions Pedro's demeanour was very earnest—at the start—and his eye was keen as it roamed here and there in search of a fitting victim. This point decided, the animation of the scene was not long delayed. The three would rush forward, giving out the yell of their people in treble voices, and the chase of the hen had begun.

I must admit that I had never before realised the sporting propensities latent in a fowl, nor the dodging and doubling feats of which one of the breed that has been accustomed to rely upon its own efforts for a living is capable. There are probably few persons accustomed to a rural life who have not at some period or other of their lives assisted at the capture of a domestic hen—an object of weight wearing the feathers of an accepted and well-known breed. The thing is no more to be compared with this chase in Misiones than is the bleeding of a farmyard pig with the pursuit of a tusker in India or New Zealand!

The hunt of the hen here was a genuine hunt, a chase that resembled in miniature that of the ostrich. There would be a sharp spurt forward at full cry, some quick swerving and manœuvres, and then the fatal *boleadores* would go whirling through the air; and the fowl would take advantage of the pause to sail clear away again with strident squawks. For it was astonishing how seldom the native weapon went home!

In justice to the accuracy of the boy's aim it must be admitted that the body of a northern hen affords a singularly small mark. In any case, so far as a hen's death from *boleadores* was concerned, an insurance company might have charged a very light premium without risk. Not that the creature would ever escape in the long run; the determination of Pedro and his auxiliaries was far too grim for that. The hen, betrayed by its physique, was wont to tire first. More often than not it would seek the refuge of the Camp itself, and the most favourite sanctuary of all would appear to have been the spot beneath my bed. Then Pedro would appear at the entrance of the quarters, his eyes aglow, his mouth set in a broad smile. "Con permiso, señor?" he would demand, between his pantings.

It was necessary to sacrifice the hen. A traitorous thing it may have been; but one must dine! So Pedro would dive beneath the bunk, and in a moment or two the incident would be closed.

There were times when even greater ambitions stirred the boy. On such occasions he would slip away unobserved, and would next appear careering about on horseback in company with the men who were "rounding up" the troops of cattle or horses. This was volunteer work, undertaken when the mood was on him. The dishes might go hang just then, and so might the cook—although the aftermath of the adventure was not to be so lightly treated.

The question arises: what will become of Pedro when he is full grown? Just now he is being pulled in various directions, and his deviations from a settled path are of little account. He must choose between the life of his fathers and this other. But I had forgotten the railway, and its influences that are to come. Pedro will almost certainly become a waiter!

CHAPTER VI

A DEAD JESUIT TOWN

The arrival at the forest—Some reflections on the Jesuit Republic—The tragedy of Apostoles—Former life of the place—Details of some ceremonies—The rejoicings of human beings as compared with those of the animals—The interior of the forest—Orange trees and native growths—A fallen capital—Verdure and masonry—The decorations of the ruins—The walls in the forest—A mutilated statue—Kindly flowers—The plaza—Present aspect of the place—A curiosity of preservation—Some recollections of the past—Uses to which the plaza was put—The Jesuit army in the days of its pride—A haunt of rejoicings—Former and present tenants of the spot.

ALL this while we have said little or nothing concerning the actual aspect of the ruins of the old Jesuit towns. There are some of these remnants of a past age quite close at hand, within an hour's drive of the Camp, as a matter of fact. So we will go bowling along over the face of the country, topping one hill after another, and sinking down into the alternate valleys, where the vegetation is richer and the flowers more luxuriant.

At length to the front rises one of those forest patches that are characteristic of this part of the world. At its edge are a number of picturesque dwellings, shaded and embowered by small plantations of trees. But these have no connection what-

ever, sentimental or otherwise, with the ruins. They are some of the homesteads of the great Polish colony that has introduced itself within the land. We are concerned with these later, but not for the moment.

We have to do with the forest itself, and that which lies within it. So we may approach the edge, and remark that where the open land ends and the trees begin are already evidences of the past state. Some fragments of masonry, its hue toned down almost to the colour of the earth, lie neglected on the ground. And even these poor objects give one pause for reflection in the accepted manner of the itinerant inquirer after truth. At such a spot the merest fragment suffices to recall the pictures and claims of the old historians who dealt with the happenings in such spots.

There are shells on the beach from which the life has passed, delicate structures choked with sand. Former haunts of the mussel and hermit crab, the translation of their dead owners—if so fragile a passing be considered worthy of any thought whatever—should evoke regret. Yet the ghost of a hermit crab who seized the work of another and squatted within an empty shell must expect less sympathy than that of a mussel who has borne the burden of his home throughout.

It is a perilous introductory route this to the dead



ON THE BANKS OF THE LOWER PARANÁ.



TYPICAL HOMESTEAD AT APOSTOLES.

Jesuit city of Apostoles, since in actuality far North-Eastern Argentina is not to be reached by way of the seashore. There is no salt sand in Apostoles; softer masses of forest and flower choke the ruins here. Yet the analogy between the deserted human and marine shells carries sufficiently far. It has not yet been decided whether the living Apostoles should rank in history as a hermit crab or as a mussel. So little lack of fruitless dispute has already attended the question that this vagueness of judgment promises to remain eternal. Whatever may be said of ways, and motives, and tenets, one thing is certain. The degree of labour expended amongst the Indians is as unquestionable as the triumph of civilisation, as commonly understood.

A mere sketch of a wondrously beautiful spot holds no place for polemics. There are half-way houses even in the sky, and neutral tints between the azure and storm-black. Let us suppose that the character of the great Jesuit Republic lay at a point midway between the poles of blessings and curses. It is the most reasonable view. In this case, seeing that angel's wings and devil's horns cancel one another, we arrive at an arithmetical result. We obtain, in fact, ordinary men, labouring hard among the Indians, joining worldly shrewdness to sanctity. It was not a very high heaven that the dusky neophytes saw through the material spectacles of

stomach and the senses that the Jesuit Fathers provided. It was the only practical appeal, and it lifted the natives from the deep slough of savagery that had been their lot.

In order to understand the tragedy of Apostoles it is necessary to compare the past with the present. A few extracts will suffice from some of the contemporary chroniclers who wrote when the streets, buildings, churches, and plazas were prosperous, intact, and populated. Here is a brief account of the ceremony observed on a special saint's day:—

“The inhabitants attend in great numbers, the officers on horseback and in their uniforms. The solemnity begins by a very fine military procession in which the Alfarez, who carries the great standard, appears mounted on a proud courser richly caparisoned, and rides under a magnificent canopy. After perambulating the principal streets in very good order to the sound of the drums and other warlike instruments of music, they repair to the great door of the church . . . the first Vespers are then performed, after which the children are made to dance in the great square.”

There was more than this, as is explained in many pages. There were tiltings at the ring, gatherings of chiefs and officers, prize-givings, illuminated streets and bonfires. A royal time for the Indians, this, when they hung on their uniforms

and trappings, and strutted in peacock pride. Yet there were others that altogether outrivalled it in pomp :—

“Nothing can compare with the procession of the Blessed Sacrament. It forms a sight which yields in nothing to the richest and most magnificent procession in any other part of the world. . . . All the beauties of simple nature are there so happily disposed as to represent her in all her glory. She even appears, if I may say so, all life and soul on the occasion ; for over the greens and flowers that compose the triumphal arches under which the Blessed Sacrament passes there appear flocks of birds of every colour, tied by the legs to strings of such a length that a stranger would imagine they enjoyed their full liberty, and even come of their own accord to mix their warblings with the voices of the musicians and the rest of the people, and bless in their own way Him whose providence carefully supplies all their wants.”

“All the streets are hung with carpets very well wrought and separated by garlands, festoons, and compartments of verdure, disposed with the most beautiful symmetry. From distance to distance there appear lions and tigers very well chained, that they may not disturb the solemnity instead of adorning it, and even very fine fishes sporting and playing in large basins of water. . . . The warbling

of the birds, the roaring of the lions and tigers, the voices of the musicians, the plain chant of the choir, all intermix without confusion, and conspire to form a concert not to be equalled in any other part of the world."

There is no doubting the final statement. It is otherwise with the alleged blending of the voices of men, beasts, and birds. But this, after all, is a mere matter of opinion. Harmony is akin to morality in that its standards hinge on geography. It is easy to sneer at the writers of a past age whose enthusiasm led them, blindfold, into regions of unsuspected humour. Those were queer birds, for instance, who found it in their temperament to strain at a fettering string and simultaneously to warble out blessings.

With the exception of such debatable points the picture is accurate. Apostoles was one of a number of centres in which work and play, prayer and pomp, chanting and feasting, were carried on in precisely similar fashion. Now the site of the town is a wooded expanse, the great walls and blocks of masonry looming here and there in furtive solidity amidst the tangle of branches and leaves.

It is worth while to enter one of the lanes that intersect this forest. At the first glimpse the way might be mistaken for an English woodland vista. But not for long. The sunshine that comes beating down upon the narrow winding path would blind a

primrose or a bluebell, and send its petals shrivelling. The walls of foliage are closer set, more varied and mysterious than those of the oak, elm, or beech. The butterflies and blossoms flaunt their beauty like women, rivals in gorgeous hues, kissing all the while.

No virgin forest this; so much is evident from the character of the growths. Holding their own sturdily against the native trunks are great orange trees, whose dark branches go soaring upwards to join the tops of the true forest trees themselves, hanging out their golden balls in the midst of the bignonia and of the gaudy wealth of other blossoms. This is the fruit of the dead Jesuits. If you wish to change the face of Nature with any degree of permanency employ Nature as an ally for the purpose! Else why should the intruding orange trees stand erect and a small block of stone at their feet be all that remains of a building that once sat in such cumbrous solidity upon the ground?

There is not a doubt about it : this poor stone block is being airily and gracefully mocked. It is a fallen capital. The intricacy of its carving is flouted by the more delicate sprays of the living fern that rest against it; blossoms sprout from the earth in its deepest crevice, and all about it the fallen oranges are wasting the remnants of their sweetness.

Farther on are the massive remnants of a wall. In the open the ruins would be imposing enough,

since in parts they rise to a height of some twenty feet. Here the vegetation has claimed them for its prey, and has swathed them about with its own growths until they seem to have become an integral part of the forest. Fern, flowers, and the giant arms of the cactus cover the dark stone; shrubs and liana tendrils press in towards its sides, while the leaves and blossoms of the trees spread a dense curtain above.

Some ruins are desolate things, but not these. Nothing, in fact, could be desolate amidst such surroundings. This may have been a church here, who knows? The walls may have formed part of one of those great buildings, with their wonderful altars and decorations, that it was the priests' proud boast to compare with any in Europe. But I doubt if there are many who could tell now; certainly there is no one in the neighbourhood capable of more than a chance supposition.

The human element of the present day enters very little into the real significance of Apostoles. It is these monuments of the past, broken and smothered as they are, that dwarf all else in the imagination. They could not be better placed. The spot, for all its exuberance, is a natural garden. It is difficult to conceive how the glades could be touched and yet fail to lose in beauty. Only one addition could possibly be introduced with success into their midst,

and by a thrice fortunate chance it happens to be there. It is represented by the old, dark stone walls that have become an intrinsic part of the forest.

At one point in the masonry is a niche that holds the remnants of a worn and mutilated statue. Armless and headless, it is an object that retains very little contour or symmetry of any kind. It once stood for a figure of the Virgin, and was laden, so they say, with bracelets and rich ornaments of gold and silver. Hence the mutilation of the stone, for the treasure was to be wrenched away by no other means when the day of spoliation came.

Curiously enough, the broken statue is still surrounded by as great a wealth of blossom as it could ever have known in the days when it reposed in the hush of the walled and roofed interior, and when the garlands of cut blooms were brought in to encircle it. The flowers have banked their glowing masses of colour in a strangely ordered fashion to right and left, lighting up the sad tints of the battered figure. Were there more folk in the neighbourhood, the thing would doubtless give rise to some talk of a miracle. As it is, Nature is doing her kindly work quite unapplauded.

A little to the front the forest lane ends, leading out into a broad open space, a large square, its four sides fringed by the thick woodland walls. This was once the plaza of the town, the centre of

all life in the place, upon which the principal buildings gave. Why this spot should have remained innocent of the more imposing growths is difficult to imagine. Yet, where the former buildings and streets lie smothered in lofty vegetation, this place is innocent of all vegetation of a more imposing order than the grasses and a few stray bushes. The cause may be some whim of Nature; it is improbable in the extreme that it can be the work of man.

Whatever its reason, the fact remains. The extent of the plaza is as accurately traced now—although in widely different fashion—as it was in the days when the town was alive. Although it retains no traces of human occupation, it is as interesting in its way as the relic-covered ground that surrounds it. For the place has seen and heard so much. It once rang to martial sounds as the battalions of the Jesuits manœuvred across its surface in all the pomp of uniforms and arms. One can imagine the admiration evoked in the breasts of the native spectators at the sight of their military brethren, and the cool, critical eyes of the instructors, the lay Jesuits who in their former lives had served as soldiers, and who probably had fought on many a European field.

But this deserted plaza did not serve for military purposes alone. It echoed to the milder sounds of processions, and feasts, and to the periodical rejoicings that were so dear to the Guaraní heart. For it



RURITANIAN CHURCH AT APOSTOLES.



JESUIT RUINS NEAR POSADAS.

was here that occurred the secular portion of the programme of the *fiestas*. Then there would be sports, and tiltings at the ring, and a hundred other amusements of the order well understood by the Indians. The birds, butterflies, and lizards were there on sufferance then. Now the place is theirs to own.

CHAPTER VII

SOME RUINS AND LIFE

A Jesuit bathing-pool—Aspect of the spot—The aquatic splashings of the past—Broken shrines—What the place has seen—Animal life—The orange trees and their fate—Neglected fruit—Some imaginings of the future—The edge of the forest—A wall of foliage and flower—The remnants of a bridge—Brooding stone and wood—Some characteristics of the countryside—An unexpected apparition from out of the forest—Dramatic riders—The procession of the *angelito*—The compensations of an early death—Paradise at small cost—Rejoicings fitting to the occasion—The ways and means of a *fiesta*—The quest of contributions—Questions of belief and maternal affection.

THE way lies onwards again through the aisles of the forest. At intervals on either hand rise massive walls, half seen through the shadowy leafage. After awhile the woodland falls away again, to give place to another open space. It is more extensive than the first, this, and its irregular extent shows that the hand of no missionary was concerned in its making.

The centre of this opening in the forest-land is dotted by a semicircular line of palms. The regularity with which the tall, slender shafts rise up to hold aloft their feathery tops against the sky is sufficiently marked to attract the eye from a distance, for the even distribution of the perfect semicircle of

palms is obviously the work of man rather than of Nature. Approaching more nearly, the reason of the plantation becomes evident. The graceful trees fringe the edge of a depression in the ground, the sides of which are flanked by massive stone walls and steps—the architectural remnants of a bathing-pool of the long-departed Jesuit era.

Curiously enough, the stone facings—though marred by crumblings here and there—have remained comparatively intact, notwithstanding that the full spread of the waters they once held has shrunk to a little, shallow lake that only covers in part the broken stone of the bottom. And even this, choked with reed and swamp flower, is the home of the loud-mouthed frogs alone now. For many generations it has been as innocent of the feet of human bathers as the stone sides upon which the lizards bask in an enjoyable peace that is broken only by the occasional lightning dart in the direction of an unwary fly.

For all its present solitude and stillness, the place was undoubtedly an important centre of aquatic ceremony and splashings some couple of centuries ago. The lengthy flight of shallow steps that closes in the semicircle of the bath must have been thronged often enough then by the robed figures of the Jesuit Fathers and the dusky forms of the neophytes in their white frocks. One can picture the scene—the advent of the Indians as they marched to the spot to

the sounds of music, and the chanting of hymns that were as inevitable in an everyday procession as the human constituents of the affair, and the kneeling of the company before the shrines that now lie in fragments of broken masonry prone on a brilliant scarlet carpet of verbena, with the great white trumpet-shaped blossoms of the datura hanging in clusters above. Then would ensue the burst of exuberance that accompanied the actual festival of the bathing, the shoutings and whoopings and splashings that the Fathers superintended from the shore, keeping a wary eye all the while upon the simple, dark-skinned converts, lest the fervour of the rejoicings should exceed the decorum that had become part and parcel of the neophyte life. No doubt there were times when the Fathers went fussing to and fro on shore as impotently as foster-mother hens with duckling broods in the water. Indeed, the nature of these northern Indians considered, it could scarcely have been otherwise, although no confession of the sort appears in the chronicles of the period.

No doubt, too, in the neighbourhood of the bathing-pool here, there were official functions and gatherings of state, beside the gorgeousness of which the glamour of the ordinary processions paled. Companies of the Jesuit army would be present then; the Indian militia, whose officers were resplendent in uniforms thickly laced with silver and gold; and

dusky civil officials, as proud of their distinctive coats as were the military of their trappings. Were the ceremony for the reception of some high clerical personage on his round of inspection of the mission-towns, the clash of martial music would have swept over the waters, and the standards would have floated in brilliant folds against the verdure of the palms and evergreen trees. For colours flew, drums beat, and fifes and clarions sounded then, until the war companies of the neophytes came forward at the given signal to prostrate themselves, and to kiss the hand of the august visitor.

The spot has witnessed all this, without question, many times over, since even the greater festivals were amazingly frequent in the great Jesuit Republic of Misiones. So it is that the clearing in the forest seems to brood, notwithstanding its flowers, sunshine, and deep blue sky. Whatever may have been the intrinsic value of the clashings of music and of the tramp of processional feet, the utter stillness that now pervades the place is a little melancholy, even by force of a contrast that can only be imagined—utter stillness, that is to say, so far as the sounds of human life are concerned.

Into the place upon which man has turned his back the lesser species have crowded in numbers. The birds are everywhere. Kingfishers dart from tree to tree; the shivering brilliancy of the tiny

humming-birds materialises over and over again, as though evolved from thin air to float for awhile before the gaudy blossoms of the plants ere disappearing temporarily in a flight too rapid for the human eye to follow. Soaring in the air high above, carving bold circles in the azure of the sky, are great black vultures, and majestic black-and-white birds of prey that trail behind them the long feathers of a divided tail. As they dip downwards from time to time the multitudinous cooing of the doves in the trees below dies away to a silence of terror. In the face of a threat from above such as this, it would seem that of all the more invisible winged creatures the butterflies alone continue to hover with a complacent mind about the clusters of great blooms that strew the earth and the branches.

Such are the dwellers that have ousted the thronging companies of the Mission Indians who went with chantings and song to the labours in the fields, and who, to the sound of music, returned of an evening to the stately towns, now deeply shrouded in the tropical curtain of the forests. This until there came scattering and destruction, and the end of the great Jesuit Republic, cursed by some, blessed by others, that stood as a monumental testimony to human endeavour, and fell as a testimony to precisely the same thing. Even of the fields there are now no traces left, although the dark foliage of the orange

trees sprouts up here and there from out of the midst of the scrub and tall grasses that cover the soil.

The fate of the orange here is typical of the spot. Unseen and uncared for, the golden balls in their thousands ripen, and fall, and rot. For who is coming to the old Jesuit bathing-place to gather oranges, or for any other purpose besides? To let the reader into a secret that rather mars the poetic perfume of the spot, much of this glorious fruit is now more pleasing to the eye than to the palate. Like many less beautiful things, it has turned bitter from want of care, and thus takes its revenge on the casual passer-by who has been tempted to test its sweetness.

But what does it matter in this lonely place? From time to time a dusky *peon* may ride by. He may even force his horse down the flight of stone steps, and water the animal in the remnants of the pool. But not for a moment will it occur to his mind that the bathing-place entered into the history of his ancestors. To him the aspect of the spot is perfectly clear. It is a pool set about with crumbling masonry in the midst of palms, orange trees, and bananas. As, of course, it really is.

Ah, well! Let us come out of the forest, and leave its beauty to the butterflies and the birds. Reflections on mere scenic glamour and on the dead past are unprofitable work nowadays. In a cattle country the ghosts of a thousand ancient Jesuits are

not worth the material price of a single heifer. Nevertheless there is something here for which to be thankful. There are worse conditions than that of mere neglect. What if this perfect woodland, with its imprisoned ruins, were ever to grow popular! The world is shrinking at such a pace that almost all things are possible at any time. Imagine booths under the white blossoms of the datura, spirits and beer in the shade of the evergreens and palms, and soiled paper on the dark stone of the ruins! There would be no litter of oranges then to waste their sweetness—or their sourness, as the case may be—upon the ground; the jetsam would be of another order. But why pursue the subject further? Such imaginings are impossible.

We have emerged from the woodland at a different place from the one at which we entered. The landscape, of course, is similar; but in many respects this latter place is the more charming of the two. Nature would seem to have shaped itself, and to have painted its colours in especially bold fashion just here.

The edge of the broad belt of subtropical forest rises up from the stretch of coarse pastures as sheer and as clearly defined as a dark green cliff from a light green sea. If you would carry the metaphor further, the material lies most conveniently at hand, for the wall of verdure is splashed with what might



CUTTING ON ARGENTINE N.E. RAILWAY EXTENSION TO PARAGUAY.



SOME FRUITS OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

well have been flung up from the green swell beneath—a spray of flowers. But here all fancies of the kind must end; for white is only one of the more insignificant of the colours with which nature has painted these blossoms. Of all tints, from flaring red to yellow and deep purple, they fleck the leaves at every point with a delightful generosity, whether set about the bases of the trees or clinging to the branches in mid-air.

In one place only is there a break in the close wall of foliage and flower. There, a dark patch of deeper shadow marks the entrance cleaved by the tunnel-like path. Emerging from this into the full sunlight of the open *Campo* is the track. Fighting hard to maintain its narrow thread of bareness intact in the face of the encroaching grass tussocks, it has crawled out from its leafy shelter like a woodland snake, to rise and dip in harmony with the undulating ground.

Some few hundred yards from the forest the slender path passes in the neighbourhood of a pool, a few acres of water that shimmer in a hollow of the land. Set in the earth on one side of this are the worn stumps of a timber sufficiently hard to resist the onslaughts of a couple of centuries. The resistance has been merely partial, it is true, since the wood, chastened now and subdued to match the colour of the red earth, is all that remains of the once great beams of a bridge that stretched from one side to

the other of the small lake. As a relic of the Jesuit dominion of old, it has numerous fellows in this north-eastern corner of Argentina. Some are slightly better preserved, others scarcely perceptible at all, but all have reached that final stage which hovers between decay and total annihilation, for here, in Misiones, the ruins of stone and wood still brood heavily, despite the material prosperity that has come upon the province.

Without the boundaries of the forest the low green hills are all but innocent of trees, save where the streams in the valleys wind their way beneath their well-defined curtains of branches and leaves. Far away in the distance is a solitary homestead, a speck of white that pricks out palely from against the background of another forest patch. A few cows are grazing here and there; many butterflies are flitting to and fro, and a bevy of tall herons remain in motionless meditation by the edge of the pond. Of humanity there has been no sign whatever; but an absence of the kind is a phase which seldom endures long, even in this remote province of Misiones.

The manner of humanity's appearance, when it occurs, is strange enough. All at once the even shadow of the woodland tunnel is vaguely mottled by advancing forms. Then out into the blinding light come three riders—a man, a woman, and a boy. A dramatic appearance this, for it is no ordinary

riding party that emerges so abruptly from the shadows. The man and the boy are as glorious as such poor finery as they possess can make them. Nevertheless they serve as the mere complements of the procession, comparatively dull and undistinguished in aspect. It is the form of the woman who rides between the pair that catches the eye. Her dress is composed of nothing beyond the ordinary loose garments of the local womenfolk; but its vivid colouring of yellow and red lends a flaunting majesty even to this crude garb. In her hand she holds a lofty, slender shaft that pricks upwards to the point where a broad blue-and-white flag floats from its extremity.

As the group advances slowly, the apparition might well cause the spectator to rub his eyes. Seen from a distance, there is undoubtedly something mediaeval in the appearance of the small party disgorged by the forest in this lonely spot. The standard, fluttering gently to the breeze on its long lance, might well be waving above a band of knights-errant in gallant defiance of the villains, monsters, and wizards lurking in the glades.

The expedition might easily be concerned with all this. The reality is not altogether without its romance—but of quite another kind. Notwithstanding the gallantry of the show, these folk are out for profit, not for deeds of daring or war, though

death, as a matter of fact, is responsible for the excursion. Lying in a reed-hut somewhere in the neighbourhood is the dead body of a young child. Hence the tears of joy that were shed when the little creature breathed its last, and hence the present moment of gladness. For the dead child is one of the fortunate few. Translated ere the world could fleck its immaculate purity, no half-way houses to heaven have lain in the path of this blessed infant. It is an *angelito* already—a little angel—and this at the cost of but a few months of mortal life!

It is necessary that this direct passage from earth to glory should be celebrated fittingly by those left behind. At such times spiritual exaltation must be displayed in material form, and into earthly rejoicings enters the inevitable question of ways and means. Nothing less than a *fiesta* can mark the occasion, and a *fiesta* entails dancing, meat, and drink—and money. Otherwise the rejoicings around the body of the *angelito* laid out in state may prove of too modest an order to suit the celestial nature of the event. Hence the procession, the gaudy clothes, and the brilliant flag beneath which the riders advance.

Just now the group is bound for the solitary hut that appears as a white speck in the distance. Arrived there, the riders will tell the glad news, give out the invitation to the revels, and will await

the contribution that is certain not to fail them. Whether it take the form of a chicken, a duck, or a few centavos, the offering can be counted on as surely as the presence of the guests at the feast. Then the riders will make their way to the next humble homestead, and will continue to scour the countryside until the list of their acquaintances is exhausted and the corresponding offerings gathered in.

The three are passing away in the distance now. Heralds of the *angelito*, the brave show is worthy even of the new inhabitant of the skies. This they know, and are proportionately proud. As they wend their way by a lapacho tree that stands in solitude upon the open *Campo*, the vividness of the procession attains to its climax. Past the great spread of branches, smothered to the full in the soft pink of their blossoms, goes the yellow and red of the woman who bears the blue-and-white flag. The ensign of the *angelito* is in the hands of the mother of the dead. It is possible that her whole heart may be given to the upholding of the gaudy thing. On the other hand, it may be with the little body in the reed-hut. But, if so, she would never tell.

CHAPTER VIII

THE POLISH COLONY

An exotic community—Its advent and situation—Northern customs in a southern land—Dwellings and churches—The local Indian and the newcomer—Relations between the two—A policy of admitted non-comprehension—Some stirrings at the Camp—Arrival of the Jefe Politico—Lamb-like *peones*—An investigation—Some explanations of the liquor-seller—Views of the Jefe Politico—His encounter with a weeping woman—Perplexity of the official—Surmises and reflections on a barbarous speech—The stake in the land held by the Poles—What the future will show—The next generation—Argentina and its influence.

It is curious that a fragment of Polish humanity, a community whose methods are not far removed from the old serfdom of Eastern Europe, should have been wrenched from its home to become wedged in between three such democratic countries as Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. As a matter of fact, as I have already had occasion to explain, the spot on which the Polish colonists have settled is purely Argentine, although, as the popular phrase has it, one could almost toss a biscuit from the colony into either of the neighbouring Republics. Unlike the locusts, they have advanced from the south, and have passed into the farthest north-eastern corner, where the territory of Misiones sends a narrow strip to jut out into foreign soil.

The neighbourhood is sacred to the memory of the Jesuits, beneath whose wings the Indian converts sheltered. Close by, as we have seen, are the ruins of towns and churches smothered in the tropical forests, the remnants of great bridges, and many other relics of a State that is now no more. As for the Polish colonists, they are not in the least concerned with the ruins, and very little, indeed, with any portion of the country that lies outside the radius of their own small cultivated plots. The community is exotic, consequently self-centred. There is scarcely one of its many thousands of inhabitants who does not regard the very distinguished and efficient countryman of noble birth who is set at their head with a degree of reverence and fear that affords a continual puzzle to the independent Argentines without the pale. Their huts, whitewashed and thatched, are of a type that is unknown in the land outside their own narrow frontiers; the great double crosses of their churches have no fellows elsewhere, while to one who watches the children at play the flaxen hair of the youngsters gleams incongruously from out of the shade of the palms.

They are inoffensive folk these, and moderately industrious. They would labour more, perhaps, were the climate less balmy and the earth not so kind. As it is, they are on the soil, but not of it. Not yet, that is to say; for the day will certainly come when

they will resemble all the rest, for Argentina is relentless in her moulding. It is strange that on one of the very spots where the Jesuits were wont to shield the Indians from contact with the outer world these people should have chosen to isolate themselves. In one sense their swarthier neighbours have become accustomed to their ways by now; that is to say, they have become reconciled to the theory that it is impossible to understand them.

With the advent of the railway the remote territory of Misiones has been drawn within the vortex of Argentina proper. Until the last few months it has stood to the Republic in the relation of a distant colony rather than a portion of the internal State. The result has been evident in a wilder life than elsewhere, with a system of police organisation to match. Throughout Argentina the Jefe Politico is an important personage: in Misiones he is—and it is well that he should be so—an autocrat. The manners of the local Indian are free and easy to a degree, and his heart, although it now beats beneath a semi-European costume, is wont to expand in periodical outbursts of exhilaration, the amusing side of which is obvious to none but himself. In the earlier days of the colony the Jefe Politico has frequently stood between such moods and the persons of the northern immigrants.

Now that the railway has come to link the spot with the south and to prick farther northwards over

the frontier river into Paraguay, the Indian *peon* has discovered that he can dig, shift ballast, and perform the general work of a navvy almost as well as any one else. So he has hastened in his hundreds to the construction camps. In some he has been brought together with fellow-labourers of a dozen nationalities ; in others he has obtained the sole occupation of the tents. It was in one of these latter that I was staying when various events occurred to provoke the intervention of the law.

The Jefe Politico had ridden up to the Camp, accompanied by four police troopers, who bore their unslung rifles in readiness for instant use. Truth to tell, the presence of the force was by no means superfluous. A Spaniard, keenly alive to a business that was both profitable and callous, had erected a drinking shop in this place, where previously no such dubious house of entertainment had existed. The result had been lamentable for the dark-skinned *peones*. To them the shanty came as a new toy. Its neighbourhood resounded from morning until night with characteristic whoops of rejoicing, given out with a fervour even greater than usual under the stress of the raw and fiery *caña* spirit that the place dispensed.

It has already been explained that the wild yell of the Misiones Indian is strangely akin to that of his redskin brother in the northern continent. Here, however, the whoops may be accepted purely as an

explosion born of good-humour and enjoyment. So long as they continued, all was well in the Camp. Their cessation was wont to imply that another, and less welcome, phase of the entertainment had been reached. Such would occur when persistent rains enforced idleness. Then a comparative silence was restful but ominous. It meant that the genial froth of festivity had been blown from the liquor and that the poison of the cheap *caña* was working in earnest. It was at this point that conversation would become fatally eloquent. Emphasised by revolver bullets and knife thrusts, the end of the argument saw a lifeless body or two stretched on the ground.

Hence the visit of the Jefe Politico with his troopers. Hence, also, the bland and saintly expressions on the faces of the *peones* of more irresponsible temperament; for the police in this far-away corner have efficient methods of commanding consummate respect. As a startled rabbit bolts for his burrow, so had each Indian sought his tent to recline in ostentatious tranquillity. One or two women rested in the shade of a neighbouring forest clump, where the red-gold of the bignonia blossoms hung in great festoons above. No scene on earth could have been more peaceful. As for the Spanish vendor of the poisonous liquid, cross-examination drew from him the confession that he was as a man bitten by a snake which he had cherished in his bosom. That these

benighted aborigines should have turned upon each other in that unnecessary fashion, after all he had done for their welfare ! It was at the greatest inconvenience, he protested, that he came to this uncivilised spot, and now he was tempted to wish that he had never set eyes on the place. But, of course, now that the wild folk had suffered their lesson, it was impossible to imagine that the future could be anything but smooth. He himself would see to it that the conduct of his customers should be all that could reasonably be expected of human nature—provided that his licence was suffered to remain. In any case he was a man of integrity and honour, and was very much at the Jefe's service in all matters !

The inquiries at an end, and the stern warnings curtly distributed, the Jefe Politico rode through the chastened Camp until he arrived at the temporary abode of the English contractors. There he dismounted, laid aside his sword, and sought the shelter of the corrugated iron in order to partake of a sociable bottle of wine. Now that his duties were done, his affability contrasted strangely with the saturnine cast in which Nature had moulded his features. On the subject of the disturbances he had little to say. Officialism and reticence go hand in hand all the world over. The phase was ephemeral, he asserted ; it would pass away when the newness of the drinking hut had worn off. When people brought railways

through a district they must expect things to happen for awhile. Just now there were too many souls gathered together in bunches. The *peones* were children, nothing more nor less. There was no malice in the bloodshed, nothing beyond an undue hot-headedness. *Caña*, cards, and argument made bad bed-fellows. Each in its own place was all very well. Blended together the result was—well, one had seen!

On other subjects the Jefe grew more communicative. It was thus that I gleaned some further insight into the prevailing local theories concerning the colonists from the North. A reference to the Poles sufficed to send aloft the eyebrows of the official and to set his head shaking in solemn resignation. The Polácos that had chosen this of all places to settle down like locusts upon the land? Was there ever such a folk! They were as God made them, the Jefe supposed; so were the cows and the river-hogs for the matter of that. Each was as much to be comprehended as the other. To his mind the cattle were the worthiest of the three. They, at all events, had their uses, which was doubtful in the case of the Poles, with their small agricultural plots and their unfathomable methods of life.

“Would you, señor, believe it,” continued the Jefe, becoming animated, “only yesterday as I was riding past one of their *chacras* a woman stood outside the hut weeping bitterly. As I drew abreast

of the spot she came running towards me, and I dismounted to find out where the trouble lay, as, after all, was the duty of a good official. Scarcely had I gained my feet when she came upon me like a summer dust storm, flung herself upon her knees, seized my hand, and commenced to kiss it and to wash it with tears! All the while she was talking like a parrot in a language that no Christian could make head or tail of. She wanted something: she wanted it very badly indeed. And she had no speech to ask it in but this gibberish of her own. For all I knew she may have mistaken me for one of the little wooden saints that they carry about on horse-back here! After a while I rode on and left her on her knees; there was nothing else for it. And then—this is the strangest part of all—when on my return I passed the place again the woman was still there, still weeping. There never was a woman whom God had blessed so plentifully with tears; they fell ceaselessly as the cataract of the Iguazú. I told her to bring an interpreter, and once again she moistened my hand, giving out voluble sounds in her barbarous speech. Carramba! It is probable that she had lost a hen, or that the hen had lost an egg. What are you to do with folk like that? And the woman was not even handsome!”

The Jefe Politico finished his wine and rode away, still brooding over the mysterious emotions of these

inexplicable colonists. The Indians came out of their tents and seated themselves in the sunrays that were beating down again to swallow the moisture bequeathed by the recent rains. The Spanish *caña* seller had gathered about him a group to whom, with tremendous vociferation, he was explaining how morality and appetite could be preserved at one and the same time. His customers should imbibe moderately each day instead of a surfeit once a week. A simple remedy, not unprofitable to the merchant.

In any case it was necessary to make hay while the sun shone; for the steel rails were stretching forward to their destination, and the time would soon come for the last of the camps to be broken up and its wild inhabitants dispersed. After all, it is the despised Poles who hold the true stake in the land. For when the others are scattered they will still remain, each on his plot of land. Little by little the community will alter. The next generation, its complexion already darkened, will speak in the Spanish tongue; they will have learned the lore of the *Campo* then, while the dwellings will become innocent of whitewash and thatch. Another two decades will see the last exotic corners rubbed off from houses and people alike. They will be staunch Argentines then. It is possible that they may visit Paris and London; but they will be totally incurious

concerning Poland. Should you tell one of them then that his grandmother had knelt before a Jefe Politico, urging him in a strange tongue, he would stare in an amazement as deep as that which his embryo grandmother would display at the present day could she foresee the destiny of her descendants. The result is inevitable for all that. The land's power of absorption is as great as the appetite of the locust. It is not to be gainsaid.

CHAPTER IX

AN AFTERNOON'S SHOOTING

Questions affecting the "bag"—The *peon* and the pointer—Varying qualities of the two—An absentee dog—Prompt sport—Luck with snipe—The return of the pointer—The *peon* as naturalist—Evidences of an unexpected intelligence—A snake story—A pleasurable companion—The behaviour of the dog—A preserver of birds—Reflections of the *peon*—Useless abundance of game—A tantalising experience—The coming of evening—Final efforts—The baneful enterprise of the dog—He receives a check—Night—The natural illuminations of the spot—The lights of the Camp—End of the expedition—Strange discovery concerning the antecedents of the *peon*—The blood of the North—Traces of his ancestry—Varying degrees of content.

WHAT concern has an afternoon's shooting with the old-time Jesuits and their missions? Very little, I fear, except that it occurred in the far north-eastern corner of Argentina that had once formed part of their land. Moreover, in order to be strictly honest it is necessary to introduce a lamentable wealth of personal and unimportant detail. Sad to relate, the actual blazing away of cartridges scarcely enters into the tale at all.

Again, could a description of a shoot begin under more unfavourable circumstances than by the con-



A POLISH RANCHO IN MISIONES.

fession of an unsuccessful day? From the point of view of literary interest, if birds do not fall to the barrel it is undoubtedly best to kill them in dozens of brace on paper. But in this case, by a supreme effort of self-control, I will refrain even from producing a well-filled game-bag of the imagination. The tale of disaster, therefore, must serve merely as an excursion which may give some slight insight into local scenery and life.

To start with conscientious accuracy, it was after lunch that the writer set out from the tent that was his temporary home, accompanied by a *peon* and a pointer dog, both lent for the occasion by a most kindly host. As events turned out, the difference between the pair of allies was even greater than is usual between the human and canine races. The *peon* was admirable in disposition, the pointer attractive in external appearance. Had the sleekness of the latter been added to the qualities of the *peon* he would have approached the perfect man; had the dog possessed the temperament of the other he would have been beyond all price. It was owing to the absence of any such desirable blending that the day ended as it did.

It must be admitted that the party became disorganised almost as soon as it set out. As we walked along the embankment where the new rails were being laid—lines that are destined soon to bear

direct trains to Paraguay—the trio had already been reduced to two. The pointer had disappeared at a gallop, nose down upon the ground. The move was not altogether unexpected, since my host had given warning of the fact that the creature suffered from occasional fits of wild irresponsibility.

We agreed to proceed without the assistance of the pointer. Indeed, the *peon*, an elderly man with a countenance unusually amiable and thoughtful for one of his race, became emphatically optimistic concerning the chances of the expedition as it then stood. Scarcely were the words out of his mouth when they received pleasant and emphatic confirmation. A flurry of little snipe rose up from a swamp on the left, and a fortunate right and left brought two of their number to the ground. The *peon* sped in to retrieve them with the agility of a boy, and waved the brace in proud evidence of triumph towards his fellows labouring on the line. The raised eyebrows of these latter and their looks of respect were comforting to a degree. It is a great and rare thing to win the open admiration of such as they—even by means of a fluke.

Stirred by this, we proceeded on our way. With snipe not a hundred yards from the railway workings themselves, what might not lie beyond! Just then sounded a rapid patter of pads, and the pointer came careering at full speed to the spot, drawn to the

gunshot as a drunkard to drink. The party was once again complete.

As we passed over the crumbling earth of the narrow track the *peon* expanded. To my astonishment and delight he proved something of a naturalist. He pointed out a spot where on the previous day he had seen one snake in the act of swallowing another, the size of the meal being very nearly as great as that of its eater. He had refrained from killing the snake, as he desired to see the end of this gargantuan swallow. When he passed the place again a little later, only some two or three inches of the tail of the lesser reptile protruded from the mouth of the larger. A few minutes later the unwilling tenant had entered completely into his new home. After which the *peon* had dispatched the snake, or snakes, as the case might have been.

Curiosity concerning the workings of nature is as rare in a *paisano* as an apple in Misiones. The wise and active elderly man formed a notable exception to the rule. As we passed over a rough bridge that crosses a narrow river edged in thickly by forest timber, he knew not only the names of the blossoming trees, but those as well of the clusters of flowers that abound nearer the earth. He pointed out an uncommon species of humming-bird and one or two of the queerer specimens of the gigantic ants that prowl upon the ground, the great bags of their bodies

almost an inch in length. As a companion the *peon* was a treasure.

Upon the further side the ground rose in a broad sweep thickly covered with long grasses and coarse herbage. It was here that the game should be found in plenty—the guide was emphatic on the point. As though to confirm the statement, the dog dropped his nose in feverish anxiety to the ground, and began to forge ahead through the grasses at a rapid pace. We followed him joyfully, convinced that the serious business of the day was about to commence. As a matter of fact, it was already ended; but we knew nothing of that at the time.

The pointer, regardless of hoarse reprimands and anxious whistlings, was careering in wide circles now. It was not long ere the first partridge got up with a whirr, and soared away towards the belt of river woodland that was now well below. Two or three brace of smaller *martineta* followed the example of the first bird, and—but why follow the tale of disaster through all its tedious details? There was no doubt as to the birds. They were there in units and in coveys, rising one after the other, well out of range. Alas, there was also no doubt as to the presence of the dog, who was racing to and fro in a mad delirium of joy, chasing away every feather that might be latent within a radius of a couple of hundred yards. The birds never owned a better friend.

By the time we had concluded an erratic course to the summit of the long hill the situation had become desperate. The pointer had been caught once, and had suffered physical correction. The sole result had been that he worked in even wider circles than before, and took particular pains to ensure that the distance between him and unsympathetic humanity should never again become inconveniently lessened. In the end we had made frantic but futile efforts to drive him away altogether from the field of his iniquity. But he greeted each flung stick with a scornful dip of his tail, and continued his business as before.

The *peon* was grieved. Nevertheless, he summoned to his aid the philosophy that is redolent of the soil. Shooting, he explained, was always an affair of chance. There were good days and bad days; it was necessary to put them together ere one judged, since many days lay ahead. There was also much comfort to be derived from the reflection that the fault of a light game-bag on this occasion did not lie with the señor.

Since there seemed nothing else to do, we sat down on a fallen log to continue the discussion. The dog, one wary eye fixed upon the shooting party, seated himself at a very respectful distance, and the sun itself, as though in sympathy, was sinking towards the horizon. All about were the folds of

the hills, the shadows already deepening in the valleys. The strange peace of early evening had already settled upon the country. The silence was broken only by the incipient notes of the frogs in the woodland belt that sheltered the distant river below, and by the occasional faint clang that sounded from the white specks of the encampment upon the further side—thin stirrings of sound that served to accentuate the stillness rather than to disturb it.

All the while the evening mystery of a country such as this was deepening. Beneath the force of the lateral rays the loftier patches of bare red soil glowed a deep scarlet, while the flowering grass heads shone with the whiteness of snow, and the green of the forest clumps here and there began to resolve itself heavily into black. But the *peon*, whether moved by the spirit of the hour or not, was continuing his reflections, and the phase is not sufficiently common to warrant neglect.

Shooting of this kind, he continued, was all very well. Birds were good for the digestion, and they were provided for that purpose. But when the game was of another kind—when men shot their neighbours, it was a pity. He shook his head in grave reproach, for he was a remarkable *peon*. There had been too much of that in the past. Now that the railway had come it would be different.

With a sweep of his arm the *peon* included the whole stretch of the lonely and beautiful land from horizon to horizon. Such deeds were natural enough, he supposed, in a country where the small homesteads were so isolated. It was the absence of folk in the neighbourhood that made it so easy for a man to find his enemy and to settle his difference in the sharp, old-fashioned way in some unfrequented spot. Few could resist the temptation, he thought; it was the fault of circumstances rather than that of the men.

Again the comfortable doctrine was characteristic of the soil. Yet it fitted ill with the calm of the evening. As it chanced, an interruption prevented any argument upon the point. Just then the brilliant pink and yellow of the horizon that had recently shone a clear blue was marked by a small cluster of black dots that was advancing in a flight that followed the course of the river. Duck! We hastened back down the hill, the pointer performing his inevitable antics well to the front. But by the time we reached the neighbourhood of the stream the duck had long ago passed by on their homeward way, and the purpling horizon was innocent of any further specks.

A despairing afterthought suggested a trial for carpincho—the great water-hog—by the river itself. The *peon* shook his head. Since the Camp had been established the carpincho had deserted that particular

neighbourhood of the stream. We eyed the two snipe — small and pathetic bundles of inertness. There seemed nothing for it. It was the ponderous duty of the airy things to represent the total trophies of the day.

Just then a great black vulture came soaring across the sky like an evil herald of the coming night. When about a couple of hundred yards distant, the large bird altered his flight to a circular sweep, hung poised for a moment, then swept downward to settle amidst the topmost branches of a tall tree. The pulse of the expedition beat fiercely at the sight. The great creature above was of little use, if shot, it is true. Yet its weight and bulk equalled that of at least a couple of score of snipe. The reputation of the party cried aloud for the body of the black vulture, whether obtained by fair or by foul means. It is possible that the inconsiderate bird suspected something of the kind; for scarcely had an advance begun—in a fashion that would have aroused the envy of an average boy scout—when the creature that was to have kept the little snipe company flapped slowly and remorselessly away.

The ephemeral twilight had already set in as we started upon our homeward way along the edge of the forest belt that stood sentry about the river. The chorus of the frogs was swelling fast, and the



AN ASADO (OX-ROASTING).



STEAM DRILL AT WORK, ARGENTINE N.E. RAILWAY EXTENSION.

shrill notes and deep boomings of the hidden stout-bodied singers were increasing in volume to a deafening point. The adventures of the day were ended, or so we thought. But, when accompanied by a dog such as ours, who could foretell the ending of a day such as this? Of a sudden the animal dashed helter-skelter forward into the tall swamp grasses that stood upwards to the height of a man. And then, ahead of him again, we caught just a glimpse of a larger and heavier body that was passing through the reeds with a crashing and rattle.

Scarcely had we started forward in turn at a run, when a yelp and a howl sounded from the front, and the dog came hastening back as fast as he had advanced. But his tail hung low now, whereas before it had been carried proudly aloft in the fashion of an arrogant standard. Although bodily unharmed, the chastened aspect of the creature gave one pause. An animal rose in my mind that demands heavier metal than that from a twelve-bore gun. The *peon's* thoughts must have been bent in the same direction, for after a moment's reflection he volunteered the statement that the district was innocent of jaguar. So we sped on again, all to no purpose, for the mysterious creature had gone, and its identity remains a puzzle to this day.

Night had fallen as we tramped on once again, the scared pointer now close at our heels. The

blossoms on the trees had died down one by one to a neutral tint, and had now become lost in the blue-grey curtain of the hour. Other illuminations had replaced the many-tinted flowers. The bold green sparks of the perpetual fireflies floated majestically to and fro, mystic and soft lamps that might be shining from the hands of invisible genii sailing behind them. As for the flashes of the lesser light-bearing insects, they snapped out at intervals in a thousand tiny points.

The lights of the Camp were ahead now—and the noises of a gathering of men and the welcome smell of cooking beef. The expedition was definitely at an end. Looking backwards, it is impossible not to experience some alarm in the reflection that the killing of a single brace of snipe should have been sung at the cost of so many pages. At this rate the bag that I protest would have been inevitable but for the presence of the treacherous pointer would have required the scope of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* for its description. Perhaps, after all, it would have been wiser to have brought the partridge, *martineta*, and duck home—to print!

That evening in the yellow glow that pervaded the friendly canvas the conversation turned on many things, amongst others on the personality of the *peon* who had proved such an agreeable companion. Then ensued the surprise of the day.

"Stuart," agreed the host, "is one of the best of his kind."

"But why," I inquired, "do you call the man Stuart?"

"For the simple reason," replied the other, "that it is his name. Although how far it would be necessary to hark back in order to unearth his white ancestor no one knows—he himself least of all."

So this poor dusky *peon*, the counterpart of a thousand of his fellows in speech, manners, and costume, had the blood of the North in his veins, after all! It seemed to me, now that I knew it, that faint symptoms of the origin had showed in the man's thoughts and natural bent. The love of nature for its own sake, the curiosity as to causes and results, the welcoming of peace and order, the unusual sense of comradeship that his presence engendered—it seemed to me now that I could read in these some remnants of the instinct bequeathed by an ancestor of whom all physical traces had been lost.

He has not a few counterparts throughout the land; their features grown as dusky as his, sunk into the ruck of humblest humanity, and knowing no other life but that of their fellows. Poor Stuart! Such is the obvious pitiful comment—possibly misapplied. There is no law in happiness, after all. His life may be at least as contented as that of his superiors—the equals of his ancestor.

PART II

IN THE TIME OF THE JESUITS

CHAPTER X

THE COUNTRY OF THE MISSIONS

The Guaraní nation—Some characteristics of the race—Comparisons with neighbouring tribes—Degrees of warlike spirit—The mental attitude of the Indian—His suspicions—Missionary methods—Their adaptation to local needs—Original native laws—A socialistic people—Situation of the first missionaries—Between three fires—The seat of contemporary Spanish government—Domingo de Irala—His dealings with the natives—The *Conquistador* and the Guaraní—The Council of the Indies and South American abuses—Regulations concerning slavery—*Yanaconas* and *Mitayos*—The ownership of men in theory and practice—The arrival of the Jesuits—Manner of their reception—Reasons responsible for a revulsion of feeling—Hostility between the Order and the colonists—Nature of the mission lands—Degrees of climate and fertility in the various districts—Local pests—Dangers from the Indians—The courage of the pioneers.

HAVING now concluded with a few of the aspects of Misiones of the present day, we may go back to the time when the Jesuit rule obtained in the land. We light upon a stirring tale, however much its various incidents may have been warped and distorted by contending historians. Even here there are features that are unquestioned on the part of all. Much has

been said concerning motives, but even their bitterest enemies have never attempted to belittle the actual achievements of the Missionary Fathers.

In order to appreciate these it is necessary to survey briefly the condition of their own special provinces as it presented itself before the pioneers of the Order trod the land. The most important inhabitants of the country were the Guaraní Indians—it must be understood that I am now referring only to the territory, and the lands immediately surrounding it, that was indisputably the scene of Jesuit government, secular as well as ecclesiastical, and in which were situated the famous thirty towns.

The Guaranís in this neighbourhood form part of one of the greatest of South American tribes whose ramifications stretch far northwards into Brazil and Paraguay. As a race they have never been distinguished for any marked warlike qualities. At the time of the Jesuit advent they were, when compared with the fierce Charrúas to the south and the relentless Chaco Indians to the west, of a comparatively tractable disposition. Nevertheless, they were addicted to their savage interludes, as is still evident in their descendants. From the point of virtue their qualities, at the best, were negative. Unlike the Tobas and the other tribes of the wild Chaco they could witness the advent of a stranger without experiencing an overwhelming desire to slay the

intruder on the spot; unlike the Charrúas, they tended to become more amiable rather than more bloodthirsty from contact with civilisation.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to conceive much more unpromising material than that offered by the Guaranís for the building up of a great human structure of religion as understood by the Catholic Church of those days. The Guaraní was by temperament a sloth and a drunkard, and such energies as he possessed were directed mainly towards the enjoyment of the animal passions. His substance, in fact, was the heaviest and most sticky clay—a material which, however satisfactory for the moulder of lifeless vessels, gave heartrending work to the purely metaphorical potter. Cunning and inconstant, moreover, as was the Guaraní of those days, it was but natural that he should credit others with a similar temperament to his own. Thus his suspicious distrust required but the flimsiest pretext to assert itself, and, once awakened, to sweep away all remembrance of consistent kindness and innumerable benefits bestowed on him. Throughout the history of the missions this unpleasing trait manifested itself on countless occasions, most usually at such periods when, in the minds of more intelligent folk, just cause would have been most clearly seen to be absent.

It has been brought against the Jesuits by writers

who lived during the period of their dominion that the system of government employed by them was baneful and enervating in its effects. The Fathers have been charged freely enough with a policy that tended towards the atrophy of both the moral and material side of the Indian nature. It is true that the methods adopted were purely socialistic, and that the division of labour and property was elaborated in a fashion that left no room for the pauper. As will be explained later, the regulations were drawn up with a degree of care and thought that was decidedly not appreciated at the time either by rival priest or layman.

In itself this form of government was undoubtedly responsible for astonishingly successful results. That which has seldom been fully grasped, however, is the fact that it was peculiarly suitable to the temperament of the folk to which it was applied. Practically without exception the laws of the nations and tribes of South America before the time of contact with the European were socialistic, as, indeed, they remain to this day in the case of those few native races who are still without the extending pale of civilisation. The spoils of the chase were wont to be shared, and—with the exception of the Incas, whose peculiar civilisation stood alone—despotism was unknown.

It is a little surprising to find that this latter characteristic was as marked among the warlike

tribes as among the peaceable folk. Even in the case of the notoriously savage denizens of the swampy Chaco and in that of the extinct Charrúa Indians of Uruguay no trace existed of any chieftainship of the type that obtained among the African and Asiatic races. In the event of war, a leader was elected; but at the conclusion of hostilities the chief returned to his ordinary status as a unit of the tribe. In times of peace there was usually a head man, it is true; but his power stopped far short of that of actual rule, and his post was always at the mercy of any other who proved himself better adapted for the situation. It was on a basis such as this that rested the domestic relations of the various tribes.

This condition of affairs has an important bearing on the conduct of the Jesuits. It proves, indeed, that it was no foreign and unsympathetic régime that they imposed upon the natives. On the contrary, they took up the reins of the Indian laws as they found them, and elaborated the crude and primitive structure into a complex and imposing monument. Undoubtedly one of the chief reasons for its success was to be met with in the fact that it was reared on a foundation that was sympathetic to the inhabitants and natural to the country.

So far as their earliest efforts were concerned, the Jesuits could not have entered the field at a moment more disadvantageous to themselves. In



*GALERAS AWAITING TRAIN AT APOSTOLES (PREVIOUS TO
EXTENSION OF LINE).*



WHEN THE WATERS ARE "UP," CHACO.

addition to the inherent suspicion and hostility of the Indians themselves, they were forced to encounter the animosity of the Spanish *Conquistadores*, who bitterly resented the exclusion of the natives from out of the field of their own control, and the raids of the Portuguese, who for their part entertained small affection for their Spanish neighbours. The pioneer Fathers thus found themselves between three fires, thwarted by the Spaniards, raided by the Portuguese, and occasionally attacked by the folk whom they sought to convert to their faith. The charges of self-interest that have been so unsparingly brought against the Order may not have been altogether groundless during some of the future periods ; but to accuse the missionaries of anything of the kind in the early days of their work is obviously ridiculous.

At the time of the arrival of the first Jesuits in the land, Paraguay was the most important centre of the River Plate Provinces. Asuncion its capital—to gain which the first *Conquistadores*, harassed by hunger and the fierce coastal Indians, had ascended the river for a thousand miles—still remained the chief centre of government. Security here had been consolidated by Domingo Martinez de Irala, one of the most famous and gallant warriors who ever governed the Spanish Provinces. But the strenuous Irala was endowed as fully with the faults as with the virtues of his age. To the *Conquistador* the

Indian represented a beast of burden from whom the last possible ounce of labour was to be extracted, no matter by what means. It was he who first instituted forced labour in Paraguay. Nevertheless there is no necessity to single him out for opprobrium on this head, since, had the initiative not fallen to his lot, it is quite certain that some one else would have introduced the system which was then prevailing in the majority of the South American districts.

It has long been the fashion to cast upon the Spanish government the blame for the abuses that were perpetrated in its name in South America. That these, as a matter of fact, should be visited on the heads of the Council of the Indies is completely unjust. It is true that the efficiency and practical virtues of this body were doubtful, and that an unduly thick coating of etiquette and red tape was wont to clog the wheels of its machinery. Nevertheless, the Spanish authorities worked in a spirit that, on the whole, was essentially humane. Although it sanctioned the system of Indian servitude, it passed numerous regulations by means of which the centres of enforced labour should in theory have been governed in a patriarchal and benevolent fashion.

Entrusted to the care of men who had won their toilsome way southwards with the avowed object of making their fortunes, and who concerned themselves about little beyond the attainment of this coveted

object, the practical operation of these theories naturally gave results very different from those anticipated in Spain. Although the letter of the law was perfunctorily and occasionally observed, the spirit died a rapid death as soon as it had been translated across the thousands of miles of ocean that intervened between the Colonies and the mother-land.

In Paraguay two distinct kinds of these settlements or *encomiendas* were officially recognised. The first of these comprised the *Yanaconas*, by which term were known those Indians who had been subjugated by private warlike enterprise. These were to all intents and purposes slaves. According to the laws, however, their masters were obliged to protect them and to teach them Christianity. They were also forbidden by the authorities to sell, maltreat, or abandon them whether on account of bad conduct, illness, or old age. It must be admitted that these regulations were excellent in themselves. At the same time it is evident enough that the men to whom they applied, and who were undisputed lords of all they surveyed, were in an ideal position to take their responsibilities just as lightly as happened to suit their convenience.

The second type of these labour communities was that of the *Mitayos*. These were made up of those tribes who had submitted voluntarily or who had been conquered by the royal forces. Their lot, compared

with that of the *Yanaconas*, was favourable, and they were supposed to enjoy not a few privileges. Thus each native company of the kind was permitted to choose the site it desired for its settlement. Its members, moreover, were divided into various sections, each of which was governed by a chief of its own election. Every male here between the ages of eighteen and fifty was obliged to labour for two months of the year for the benefit of the proprietor of the *Mitayo*, and to each settlement of the kind a teacher of the Christian faith was appointed. In the interests of the natives each province was visited annually by an official, whose duty it was to hear complaints and to remedy abuses.

All this, of course, sounds comparatively humane on paper. But, as was only to be anticipated, the fact remained that the welfare of the inhabitants of both *Yanaconas* and *Mitayos*, instead of depending on the laws, was entirely at the mercy of the various Spanish proprietors. In those days punishments were nothing if not corporally severe. The letter of the law, as drawn up in Spain, had left the potent ingredient of human nature entirely out of its calculations. It was highly improbable that the owner of a *Yanacona* would permit some shadowy enactment to interfere with his treatment of an Indian addicted to bad conduct. In practice, in any case, no such repression was exercised. The master of a *Yanacona*,

moreover, in his not unnatural haste to acquire riches, was want to look with some disfavour upon a human chattel who, in obedience to his instincts, endeavoured to remain idle for ten months out of the year. In such a case it might be taken for granted that the theoretical holidays of the native would suffer curtailment to the point of extinction.

This was the situation when in 1588 the first Jesuits made their appearance in Paraguay. In the first instance, since the various districts had been notably understaffed by priests, the newcomers received a warm welcome, and at Asuncion a church and college were built for them at the public expense. The sentiments of friendship proved of lamentably short duration. When the true object of the Jesuits' presence became known, when it grew evident that the aim of the Fathers was to stand between the Spanish masters and the Indians, upon whom these depended so largely for their wealth, the attitude of the Spanish landed proprietors changed at once into bitter hostility.

There was nothing astonishing in this revulsion of feeling. From the landowners' point of view there was no doubt that the policy of these interfering priests would end by the taking away, if not of their bread, at all events of no small proportion of their butter. The matter, indeed, was one of vested interests, circumstances that are second only to those

of religion in the breeding of hostility. From that point onwards, although many of the officials showed a disposition to friendliness, the Jesuits could count upon the co-operation of none of the Spanish settlers in the land.

To the traveller in Misiones and Southern Paraguay it must appear as though the Jesuits had sought out for their settlements some of the most benign and smiling stretches to be met with in the whole of the South American continent. It is true that the landscape frequently resembles a smiling garden, and that the climate is as delightful as any other in this part of the globe. But it would be entirely erroneous to suppose that the Jesuits chose these districts for their headquarters solely on account of their fertility and pleasant setting. That their chief cities should have been situated in these neighbourhoods was the result merely of the geographical disposition of those Indian tribes who proved themselves the most amenable to the rule of the Church.

Even in the more immediate surroundings of these favoured localities, where the work of the Jesuits was at least as strenuous if not invariably so successful, the circumstances were widely different. In Northern Paraguay and in the district of La Guayra, which now forms part of Brazil, the climate, natural conditions, and wild animals that abounded frequently presented an appalling prospect to the pioneer missionary. Here,

indeed, the forest lands held a wealth of plagues sufficient to chasten the ardour of the most determined. Floods, fever, jaguars, vampire bats, virulent swarms of mosquitoes, snakes and countless noxious reptiles and parasites, crocodiles and man-eating fish in the rivers—these are but a few of the countless dangers and discomforts with which the low-lying forests were infested. In such places, moreover, the path itself of the explorer was in any case rough, and was frequently only to be followed by the forcing of the human body through the dense tangle of thorny undergrowth, a process that resulted in a heavy and merciless toll on clothes and flesh alike.

Just across the Paraguay River, moreover, separated from the peaceful settlements only by the width of the stream, stretched the forest and swamps of the Chaco. Here the natural conditions were aggravated—as they remain to this day—by the presence of peculiarly intractable and savage Indians. The perils that beset the Jesuits here were perhaps the greatest of all. Indeed, with all their patience and skill, the missionaries never succeeded in establishing a permanent settlement in this region. Time after time a small colony was founded; but the ending of the attempt was in every case the same, the massacre of the Fathers and the smothering of the incipient buildings beneath the returning wave of vegetation.

It was into lands such as these that the Jesuits struck out, braving all dangers, and by painful toil learning the rudiments of the strange languages as they went. Undoubtedly they had their faults—it would be a poor compliment even to the earliest of the pioneers to suppose his structure of iron rather than of clay—but none even of their worst enemies can deny the courage of this devoted band.



CONSTRUCTION CAMP, MISIONES.



PEONES CAMP DURING RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION IN MISIONES.

CHAPTER XI

THE FLOCKS OF THE JESUITS

Missionary work carried on before the arrival of the Jesuits—Their first entry into South America—Successes of the Order—The Bishop of Tucuman applies for Jesuit help—The assistance rendered—Honourable reception of the missionaries—The advent of reinforcements—A cosmopolitan company—Some incidents of the priests' voyage—Alleged capture of their vessel by an English buccaneer—Ill-treatment of the Fathers—Legend concerning sacrilege and its consequences—Vengeance wrought on the pirates—Escape of the Jesuits—The early Jesuits and miracles—Movements of the missionaries—The Guaraní Indians as described by one of the Fathers—Their vices and virtues—Native religious beliefs—Some ceremonies and rites—Allegations of cannibalism—A gruesome baptism—Funeral procedure—Witch-doctors—Crude remedies—A comparison between the South American and African natives—Limited intelligence of the Guaranís—A dull grey field of labour—Indians of the past and present—Mr. R. B. Cunningham Graham on the transformation of their character—Some questions of influences—The Indians of the Chaco—A Church of England missionary on that region—The work of Mr. W. Barbrooke Grubb—The price of success—Fate of expeditions—Savage customs—Quaint beliefs.

THE events that immediately preceded the arrival of the Jesuits in Paraguay are in many respects wanting in clearness, since no small amount of legend has succeeded in intermingling itself with the bare historical facts. According to some authorities, the Jesuit missions were not the first to be established

in the land. Father Charlevoix upholds this view. According to him—

“Father Lewis de Bolanos, one of Saint Francis Solano’s disciples, and who likewise died in the odour of sanctity, founded among the Guaranís of Paraguay a fervent colony of Christians, which he governed for a long time. He even translated into their language a catechism . . . but his superiors having at last thought proper to recall him on account of his great age and infirmities, the little flock he had brought together, and with whom, it is probable, he could leave no pastor of his own order, fell afterwards into the hands of the Jesuits, and has since proved the germ, as it were, of these flourishing churches of the Paraná and the Uruguay.”

However this may be, it is certain enough that the Jesuits had already become sufficiently known for their work in South America ere the time came for them to enter Paraguay. As early as 1550 they had obtained a footing in Brazil. They had also settled in Peru, and in both countries had effected a number of conversions. So marked, indeed, had been their success in this respect that “every one published that this new Order, whose founder was born at the time Christopher Columbus began to discover the new world, had received from heaven a special mission.”

It is said that it was the Bishop of Tucuman who,

in view of the great want of secular clergy in his diocese, first sent urgently to Brazil and Peru for Jesuit assistance. In Tucuman the first arrivals met with an almost royal reception. They were received in state by the governor, the nobility, and the officers, and passed beneath a number of triumphal arches that had been erected in their honour.

In the meanwhile a reinforcement of Jesuits, with whom we are more intimately concerned, had arrived in Córdoba from Brazil. The small company was built up of cosmopolitan elements. It comprised Leonardo Armenio, an Italian; Juan So'ano, a Spaniard; Thomas Filds (or Fields), a Scotsman; Esteban Graõ, a Portuguese, and Emanuel de Ortega, likewise of Portuguese nationality.

Since the spelling of these various names differs in almost every account, I have thought it best to employ the most popular, although not necessarily the most accurate, rendering. In many cases, too, there is a certain amount of confusion concerning the exact date of the arrival of the missionaries; but the majority render it as 1587.

Padre del Techo has it that the voyage of the devoted band from Brazil to the Rio de la Plata was not unaccompanied by incident. According to him the vessel in which they travelled was captured by English pirates off the mouth of the river. The Fathers suffered ill-treatment at the hands of the

buccaneers, who respected neither the persons of the priests nor the holy objects they bore. One of the sea-dogs, indeed, in order to express his contempt for the sacred relics and vessels, went to the length of kicking them. Father Ortega, unable to suffer the sight, interfered actively, and, as a result, was flung overboard for his pains. He was, however, almost immediately hauled back into the vessel, as the pirates destined for him a still more cruel end.

They were debating on the manner of this that should be most satisfactory to themselves—and consequently least agreeable to the unfortunate Jesuit—when a miraculous incident interrupted their plans. The man who had kicked the sacred objects began to suffer violent pains in his foot. The offending member was amputated; but no remedy of the kind would serve, and in twenty-four hours the man was dead!

The curse extended itself to the ship and its crew. The former was battered and driven helplessly by appalling storms, and the latter suffered hardship and the pangs of hunger. In the end the craft was wrecked in the neighbourhood of the Straits of Magellan. The little Jesuit company alone sailed safely back to Buenos Aires in a small boat!

At this period miracles were bountifully frequent. Thus it happened that shortly after their arrival at Córdoba Fathers Bárcena and Ortega (the former

had arrived independently of the others) found themselves, when on an expedition, in danger of perishing for want of provisions. Father Bárcena mounted his horse, and set off on a long and perilous journey in order to obtain the necessary food. To his astonishment the horse he rode appeared to fly rather than to gallop, and in eleven hours he had accomplished a journey that in the ordinary way occupied no less than eight days, returning joyfully with the supplies at the same marvellous speed.

To the less credulous minds of the present day such accounts savour somewhat of the ingenuous atmosphere of the nursery. Nevertheless there can be no doubt that they were not conceived in the minds of such earnest and self-sacrificing men for the purpose of self-exaltation. Going to their posts in an exalted frame of mind, it is likely enough that they in reality conceived something miraculous from the happening of events that made for their preservation. In any case the relation of these marvels by the way does not in the least detract from the credibility of the doings of the Jesuits among the Indians.

With Armenio and Graõ we have little more to do, since they made but a cursory stay in the River Plate, and returned to Brazil very shortly after their arrival. The others remained, and in 1588 Fathers Solano, Ortega, and Filds repaired to Asuncion in

Paraguay at the request of the bishop of that place. Here Solano took up his abode, but his two companions after a while made their way up the river to Eastern Guayra, and then began their real work among the Indians.

The missionaries were under no delusions concerning the character of the folk amid which they found themselves. Here is a description by Father Charlevoix of the Guaraní race—

“To speak in general of these people, we may affirm that they are more or less of an olive complexion ; that they are commonly rather below than above the middling stature, though it is no uncommon thing to find among them persons of the highest ; that most of them are pretty thick legged and jointed, and round and somewhat flat faced ; that almost all the men, and even the children, especially in the warmer climates, go quite naked ; and the women wear no more covering than the most relaxed modesty seems absolutely to require ; that those of every nation have their own particular manner of adorning or rather disfiguring themselves, sometimes to such a degree as to make the most hideous appearance ; that there are some, however, who occasionally wear caps and other ornaments made of the most beautiful feathers ; that almost all of them are naturally dull, cruel, and inconstant ; treacherous, and excessively voracious, and cannibals ; given to drunkenness, void

of foresight and precaution, even in the most indispensable concerns of life, lazy and indolent beyond the power of expression; that except a few, whom the love of plunder or revenge has rendered furious rather than brave, most of them are arrant cowards, and that those, who have preserved their liberty, are entirely indebted for it to the situation of the inaccessible places, where they have taken refuge."

Such is the Guaraní character as rendered by Father Charlevoix. There is no doubt that this historian has not in the least exaggerated this formidable catalogue of dubious virtues. Indeed, an astonishing number of the peculiarities he emphasises here are evident up to the present day in the case of many of the more remote tribesmen.

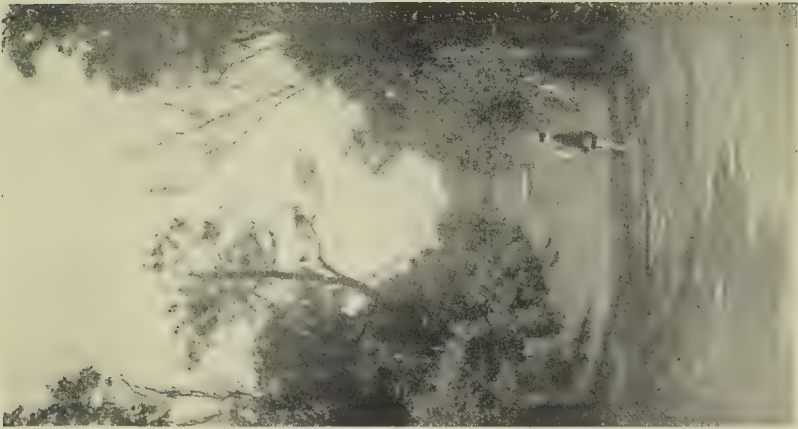
It was from material such as this that in the end the Jesuits built up their great centres of civilisation. Indeed, for the appreciation of the true magnitude of the feat, it is necessary, even at the risk of becoming wearisome, to enumerate some of the manners and customs of these natives in their primitive state.

The mental condition of the Guaraní—which phase, of course, was the first to appeal to the Jesuits—was as shadowy as their forests. Some vague acknowledgment of a superior Being seemed to be implanted within them; but they apparently possessed no

regular form of worship, and knew nothing of idols. Nevertheless, their temperament was more imaginative than that of the Indians on the plains of the Banda Oriental to the south. They believed, for instance, that there was a tiger and a great dog in the heavens who periodically devoured the sun and the moon, which explained the dreaded phenomena of the eclipse.

According to some authorities they were cannibals ; but this does not appear ever to have been definitely proved. Father Charlevoix, corroborating the famous Father del Techo, gives a gruesome account of a custom which, he alleges, they employed—

“The ceremonies they observed in giving names to their newborn children will best serve to give us a just idea of the savageness of this nation. Thinking it unlawful to perform this ceremony without the death of a prisoner of war, they deferred it till they could make one. After entertaining him plentifully for several days, and even giving him his choice of as many young girls or grown-up women as he thought proper, they cut his throat on the day appointed for that purpose, with great ceremony. As soon as he was dead every one touched his body, or struck it with a stick ; and during this operation they gave names to all the children that had not received any. This done, the body was cut up ; and every family took home a piece of it to make into broth, of which every one took a mouthful, not except-



A LANE IN APOSTOLES.



A SHADY STREAM IN MISIONES.



DILIGENCE ON THE ROAD FROM
APOSTOLES TO POSADAS.

ing children at the breast, whom their mothers took care to make partakers of this hellish repast."

The women, it is said, on the death of their husbands, used to fling themselves down from some eminence, which operation usually crippled them for the remainder of their lives. This procedure, as a matter of fact, must have been very restricted in the area of its custom. For in Misiones and the southern parts of Paraguay the gentle undulations of the ground are broken in remarkably few places, and thus offer very little opportunity for this violent evidence of affection.

Witch-doctors formed a fairly prominent institution among the Guaranís; but they do not appear to have possessed anything approaching the power which is still held by their brethren of the present day in the Chaco. In cases of bodily illness the method of cure resembled that employed by the now extinct Charrúa Indians of Uruguay. They would suck with might and main at the part affected; but in this remedy lay the beginning and end of their medical science. Their witch-power proper was employed in rather more complicated fashion, and the evil effects of their curses and spells were deeply dreaded, with the natural consequence that the mere knowledge of working of an evil spell was generally sufficient to prove fatal to the person accursed.

With the exception of such comparatively rare

episodes, the Guaranís showed evidence of neither fanaticism, nor, indeed, of fervour of any species whatever. In this respect, of course, the South American differed widely from the African. Strongly imbued as was the latter with inherent mysticism and a deep-seated love of rites of all description, he became, once converted, a disciple of such wholesale enthusiasm that it grew necessary to restrain his fiery attributes rather than to stimulate his zeal. Compared with his mental disposition, that of the Guaraní was sluggish and apathetic to a degree. In his case, ere a light could be struck in his brain, it was necessary even to implant the materials for the fuel.

The intellectual capabilities of the race were more or less on a par with their spiritual status. Some authorities have it that they could count up to three, others that the amount was five, which latter figure is the more generally accepted. Their language was as crude as all else, as unfinished, indeed, as their morals, customs, and habitations. Such was the dull grey field which offered itself for the Jesuit work. Indeed, it is not too much to say that almost the sole advantage offered to missionary enterprise by the temperaments of these primitive folk lay in the fact that their dispositions were less warlike than those of their neighbours. This peaceful trait, as a matter of fact, was only comparative. Curiously

enough, it is far less evident among the survivors of the nation than was apparently the case at the time of the Jesuits.

Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham, probably the greatest living authority on the subject, makes the following remarks concerning the Guaranís of to-day :—

“Like their forefathers, they seldom unite in large numbers, and pay little honour or obedience to their chiefs, who differ in no respect, either in arms, dress, or position from the ordinary tribesmen.

“In Brazil they are confined to the southern portion of the province of San Paulo, and are called by the Brazilians Bugres—that is, slaves. A more unfitting name it would have been impossible to hit upon, as all efforts to civilise them have proved abortive, and to-day they still range the forests, attacking small parties of travellers, and burning isolated farmhouses. The Brazilians assert that they are cannibals, but little is known positively as to this. What has altered them so entirely from the original Guaranís of the time of the conquest, who were so easily subdued, it is hard to conjecture.”

The point is an interesting one, since undoubtedly a similar change has occurred on the borders of Paraguay. It is true that the blood here has been largely mixed with that of other nations. But a similar process has been at work in the case of the

gauchos of the plains to the south. While the effect upon the latter has tended to a more peaceful temperament, the result in the case of the Guaranís has worked in the opposite direction. It is possible, of course, that something of the influence bequeathed by the merciless civil strife that followed the war of independence has remained, but this, as an explanation, scarcely seems sufficient.

Outside the Guaraní country the missionaries were not so uniformly successful in their work. To the east and to the north of their main Paraguayan countries, in the neighbourhoods that now constitute portions of Uruguay and Brazil, they obtained great influence over those folk who, if not actually of Guaraní stock, were made up of kindred races. From these their Reductions obtained many recruits. Westward of the Paraná River, however, the situation was very different. The inhabitants of the Chaco Territory showed themselves consistently hostile, and here the efforts of the missionaries proved of no lasting avail.

If any one will take the trouble to read a work by Mr. W. Barbrooke Grubb, entitled *An Unknown People in an Unknown Land*, they will obtain a better idea of the mysterious regions of the Chaco than has ever before been rendered by any English writer, or, for the matter of that, I believe I am not claiming too much in adding, by any author of whatsoever nationality.

A missionary of the Church of England, Mr. Grubb penetrated into the unknown Chaco, and began his work among the Lengua Indians rather more than twenty years ago. In order to give an admirable illustration of the fringe of this wild country as it remains even to-day, it is necessary to quote one of his paragraphs:—

“At night on the Chaco bank may be seen the half-naked forms of Indians as they move to and fro in the flickering light of their camp fires, which but dimly illuminate their rude shelters, standing in a clearing in the dark forest which forms a background. The painted faces and plumed heads of these savages enhance the weirdness of the scene. The sounds which greet the ear are equally barbarous. A low droning chant may be heard, accompanied by the rattle of gourds, and broken only too often by a shrill cry of pain when a child, perhaps, has been cruelly murdered, and the women’s voices are raised in lamentation. Yet from this bank at the same moment may be plainly heard the loud shriek of the siren of a large Brazilian passenger steamer as she nears the port of a Paraguayan town just across the river, with the bright rays of her electric light streaming from her saloons and decks, and the twinkling lights of the town dotted along the opposite bank easily distinguishable in the distance.”

In the interests of the Church of England South

American Missionary Society, Mr. Grubb succeeded in passing through the outskirts and in making his way amongst the Indians in the heart of the Paraguayan Chaco itself. A mission has now been established for many years in the midst of the Lengua, and thus, where the Jesuits of old failed in their conscientious endeavours, it is to the everlasting credit of the Church of England that it has succeeded.

Notwithstanding this, it is quite unnecessary that the efforts of the old-time Fathers should be made to suffer by comparison. In almost every instance their lives were the price of their failure. Mr. Grubb's cool recital of his experiences proves conclusively on how many occasions he escaped by the mere skin of his teeth, and once, indeed, severely wounded, he was actually left for dead. In the words of Mr. H. T. Morrey Jones, the editor of the work: "His recovery from his wound under such trying circumstances was considered so extraordinary that Dr. O'Connor, the eminent surgeon of the Buenos Aires British Hospital, who operated on him, gave him a letter of introduction to Sir Frederick Treves, saying, 'Put your surgical car to his chest.' The latter, however, was never presented, as Grubb returned immediately to the Chaco."

I am perhaps emphasising the perils of the Chaco to a degree which Mr. Grubb in his modesty may not appreciate. But it is necessary in order that the

reader may understand the situation of the Jesuits who in their time attempted the task, and who did, indeed, get so far as the foundation of establishments. Let it suffice to say that up to the period of Mr. Grubb's advent the fate of a secular expedition depended almost entirely on the strength of its armament, and the tales of massacre had been continued at intervals throughout.

Indeed, the history of the various military expeditions to the Chaco dates back to 1556. In that year Don Andreas Hurtado de Mendoza, the Viceroy of Peru, sent a force under Captain Andreas Manso to attempt the pacification of the country. Manso succeeded in advancing as far as the plains that lie between the rivers Pilcomayo and Bermejo, and had even gone the length of beginning to build a town. But one night, when, lulled into a false sense of security, the garrison slept, the Indians crept up stealthily through the forest and morass, and, surprising the budding town, massacred the force. The tragedy was the first of a long and gloomy line of its kind.

According to many of the old historians, the first contact with the inhabitants of the Chaco seems to have inspired a peculiar dread in newcomers to the land. Their aspect was apparently menacing to a degree, and the colours with which they were wont to paint themselves added to this terrorising effect.

These natives were strongly imbued with a sense of the melodramatic, and this weird appearance of theirs appears to have had its practical advantages from their point of view. It is said that a Spanish captain who had served with distinction in the European wars, when sent into the Chaco with a body of soldiers, was so thunderstruck at the appearance of the grim warriors who came out to the attack that he fainted away. Of the sequel to this unusual preliminary to a battle I am ignorant.

Some details of the religious life of another of the Chaco tribes are afforded by the missionaries. These folk were much attached to the moon, claiming it as their mother. One of their beliefs concerning this closely resembled a Guaraní superstition. On the occasion of an eclipse they imagined that the moon had been attacked by hogs, and was being bitten, attributing to blood the red tinge that overshadowed the body. Much excitement would then occur, and the natives hastened to the assistance of their troubled mother in the sky. In order to render this effective, they shot arrows into the heavens until the eclipse had passed, and the moon shone again in all her natural brilliancy. After this the Indians, filled with a due sense of heroism, doubtless celebrated their victory by an unusually gluttonous feast, and by a stupendous debauch on the fermented liquor of the algarrobo bean.



PALMS AND BROKEN MASONRY.



REMAINS OF JESUIT BATHS AT MISIONES.

This same tribe showed considerable imagination in their interpretation of such events, more especially in the various atmospheric phenomena. They held, for instance, that thunder and lightning were the voices of departed souls, dwelling amid the stars, when raised high in quarrels!

But with these folk we are very little concerned in this volume. As has already been said, the Jesuits failed to establish any permanent settlements in their midst, although a number of their missionaries paid for the attempt with their lives.

Thanks to the courtesy, however, of the South American Missionary Society and of Messrs. Leach of Jujuy, I am able to reproduce a number of photographs, which show the present-day types of the more savage nations with which the Jesuit missionaries had to contend. These are at length being brought within the pale of civilisation; but how recently this phase has been brought about is evident from their costume, or rather from the lack of it. Away from the outskirts of their territories, the majority of these wild folk retain precisely the same manners and customs that for centuries have been characteristic of the race.

CHAPTER XII

THE WORK OF THE PIONEERS

Jesuit methods of conversion—Their appeal to the Indian understanding—Beauty and the barbaric mind—The buildings and services of the Church—Effect upon the Guaranís—Theories of the missionaries—The influence of custom and surroundings—A rational view—Attractions held out to the savages—How the missions were established—Relations with the natives—Suspensions of the Guaranís—Jesuit anxieties—A policy of patience—Linguistic difficulties—Preliminary efforts—Wholesale baptisms—Bribery and its justification—The native heralds of the Fathers—Critical situation of the missionaries—An adventure of Father de Cerqueira—An heroic action and its result—Treachery on the part of a European—A wolf in sheep's clothing—The cure of souls and the capture of bodies—How the cunning of a slave-dealer affected the missionaries—An adventure in a storm—The devotion of Father Ortega—Baptism under tragic circumstances—The career of Father Ortega—Good work and its reward—An unjust imprisonment—Death of a great missionary.

It is sufficiently easy to understand how the Jesuits overcame the active hostility of these uncouth natives. That which is more difficult of comprehension is the manner in which the Indian society was led up to the comparatively high pitch of civilisation to which it attained.

In this respect the old Jesuits showed a very simple and practical knowledge of human nature. A squalling child is not hushed by the sight of a

Rembrandt or by a voice intoning the text of Bernard Shaw. In a case such as this the lulling force lies in a rattle or in something edible. The Indians, like the majority of quite untutored folk, were children in mind and temperament. It goes without saying that learned argument was lost on them. It was necessary to approach the cloudy intellects by way of the things that mattered.

From the very first, one thing became clear to the missionaries. The senses of the Guaranís had to be impressed ere their souls stood any chance of being tickled into activity. Therefore, the churches once built, the first aim of the Jesuits was to inspire the converts with the most stupendous respect for the sacred buildings.

To this end the churches erected were of a splendour that was amazing in view of the rawness of the community and of the isolation of the first settlements. The buildings themselves were large, possessing from three to five naves, with altars that were magnificently provided with decorations. The walls, moreover, were embellished by elaborate paintings, and the interior was wont to be hung with verdure, and with festoons of the gorgeous blossoms of which the country is so prodigal.

The result went to make a scene of beauty of the kind such as the Indians were able to comprehend. Fresh from the tangled glades of their forests, they

drank it in with mingled avidity and awe. The manner in which the services were conducted was proportionately solemn. So deep was the effect upon the minds of the Indians that they would burst into sobs, and in an access of emotion would recite aloud their newly realised faults. In order to prove their devotion they would tirelessly search the woods for honey, the wax of which they would burn before the altars.

To the more complicated ceremonial details I am referring later. The success of the ritual, however much it may have lacked in the finer essence of spirituality, lay in the fact that it added to the Indian temperament a degree of reverence that it had never known until then, from which foundation it was hoped that the minds would climb into the stars. In these more ambitious projects the Jesuits undoubtedly experienced numerous disappointments; nevertheless, the amount of silk which they succeeded in manufacturing from the coarsest sow's ears was a rich tribute to their efforts.

Dealing with this subject, an old Jesuit writer pertinently protests against the species of contemporary criticism launched against their efforts. "These travellers," he says, "and most of those who look for amusement in their memoirs, don't sufficiently attend to the spirit in which all these things are done; nor consider, as they ought to do, that the difference and

variety of the several climates is attended with a great deal in the way of thinking and acting of those who live under them ; that, besides, a great many things ought to be overlooked in men but newly civilised and converted."

Now this protest to my mind exhibits a liberality of spirit that, it may be taken for granted, was lacking in the critics to whom the writer refers. To have judged the erstwhile naked savages from the standard of a congregation in the cathedral of Seville would be much akin to the present-day comparison of a few newly baptized Matabeles with a suburban church or chapel-load of people. Yet it does not in the least follow that the emotions of the dusky converts are not considerably the keener of the two.

As it is, the picture is not without its own merits. We see the Guaranis emerging from their forest retreats, from the force of no word of command or military power. That they remained in the first instance was due to nothing beyond their own free will. Given a couple of missionaries in the midst of some thousands of armed Indians, any other theory is clearly ridiculous. Having emerged, they built for themselves crude huts in the neighbourhood of the church that already formed the central point of the community.

In later years these first crude shelters were exchanged for the more comfortable dwellings of

civilisation, arranged in ordered lines. By that time the various centres had become consolidated and firmly established. In the beginning the anxieties of the Jesuits were ceaseless. The wild folk, although fascinated, remained shy and suspicious to a degree. When the whim took them they would fling off this new and still doubtful garment of civilisation, and would betake themselves back to the depths of their forests, there to resume their barbarous practices. Then would ensue tribulation at the deserted mission station, and the two Fathers, who perhaps of the entire company alone were left, would set out in patient pursuit of the erring sheep. And when they had found them—arriving after many days, spent with fatigue, and with limbs and garments torn from the passage of the forest—would begin the old persuasions, the original beseechings, all over again!

It was seldom that their eloquence failed. Almost invariably the end resulted in the tramping back to the mission station of the whole company, united once more. And then the walls of the new church would echo again to the singing of the congregation, and the huts and neighbouring fields would be populous once more. But it was hard work, trying even to the patience of a Jesuit of that period!

To the many other difficulties under which the Jesuits laboured at the start of their enterprise was added that very serious disadvantage brought about

by their ignorance of the Guaraní speech. In later years, of course, they became fluent exponents of the tongue, and were responsible for the production of a number of printed publications, and for at least one grammar, in the native language.

Owing to this fact alone, there is no doubt that the first conversions were hastily effected, and brought about by means of outward display rather than by an appeal to the native susceptibilities which were at the time to all intents and purposes non-existent. The very first journeys of the early missionaries resulted in the conversion of thousands of these uncouth forest-dwellers, as the Fathers themselves proclaimed with a just pride. All that had really happened, of course, was that the Jesuits had succeeded in implanting the first grains of confidence in the savage minds, and had induced the natives to follow them, no small feat in itself. It was not until a considerable while afterwards that the real process of civilisation began.

It must be admitted that the Fathers blended with the methods of the dove the wisdom of the serpent. When they had accomplished the taming of a certain section of a tribe, for instance, they would send some of the members of their brand-new congregation farther out into the wilds. The native ambassadors would be laden with presents, which they showered upon their brethren who had not yet been brought

into contact with the white labourers in this weedy vineyard. It stands to reason that, from the missionary point of view, the results were satisfactory.

On account of these methods much blame has been cast upon the Jesuits by contemporary Spanish authors, as well as by many writers of later periods. It is difficult to see how far these are justified in this censure. As a preliminary to the opening up of relations it is surely better to implant into the native stomach rations rather than bullets. Moreover, the process is time-honoured, and can claim a host of precedents in Scripture.

As an instance of the oppressive measures employed by the Jesuits, it is also alleged against them that they captured by strategy a company of these Indians who had fled from the work imposed on them, and flung the unfortunate folk into prison. That measures of discipline were occasionally resorted to by the Jesuits and sanctioned by the Indians is undeniable. But to assert that one or two Jesuits, unarmed men of peace, had it in their physical power to oppress and maltreat the tribes among which they dwelt is the height of absurdity.

As a matter of fact, it was the Jesuits who went in fear of their lives, not the Indians. Such, indeed, was but the natural course of events. Compared with that of the surrounding countries, the tale of massacre in the territories that now comprise Southern



JESUIT RUINS AND REMAINS, APOSTOLES.



STATUE AT APOSTOLES.

Paraguay and the Argentine Misiones was insignificant. Yet even here the situation of the Fathers was frequently critical enough. Elsewhere the toll of lives was heavy.

The devotion of the Jesuits was undoubted. Incidents of a far later date show how long this was continued. An adventure of Father de Cerqueira, when he first entered the country of the Abipones in 1641, affords only one example of a multitude of similar perils undergone by the missionaries. He had advanced with two natives: "When in a short time they could discover two hundred Indians on horseback, but without saddles or stirrups, making towards them in full gallop. But, though their wild and savage looks, their loose disordered hair, and the long javelins they held in their hands, might well be supposed capable of striking terror into a man, who saw himself alone in a manner, and at their discretion, the missionary, full of confidence in Him without whose permission they could not touch a single hair of his head, immediately doubled his pace to meet them, and, lifting up his crucifix, 'Children,' cried he, 'two of my brethren formerly announced the Gospel to your nation, whose esteem, and even confidence, they acquired. Animated by the same zeal for the salvation of your souls, I am likewise come a great way, in spite of a thousand dangers and difficulties, to endeavour to make you open your eyes

to your nearest concerns. 'Tis in vain you attempt to terrify me. Death, with which you threaten me, is the chief object of my wishes. But I conjure you not to spurn at a benefit of which you would too late repent the loss. Besides, what have you to fear from a single man, and without arms? The confidence with which I put myself into your power ought to convince you that I am come here merely to serve you.' "

The barbarians, we are told, were duly convinced, threw down their arms, and saluted the missionary with the profoundest respect. The story, of course, is taken from Jesuit sources; but it is quite unnecessary to suppose for this reason that the heroism of the chief actor has been overstated. Indeed, without a number of such acts no Jesuit settlement could ever have been formed.

There were times, moreover, when the ordinary perils were accentuated by treachery from within the ranks of the missionaries' own attendants. Fathers Cataldino and Macerata when travelling through La Guayra in 1610 were supplied with a peculiarly daring example of the kind.

The two missionaries had not yet familiarised themselves thoroughly with the Guaraní language. Ere starting upon their expedition, therefore, they were glad to avail themselves of the services of an inhabitant of Ciudad Real, a complete master of

the native tongue, who offered to accompany the pair.

The man proved an agreeable enough companion, but in the course of their journeyings the worthy Fathers began to scent some mystery about his behaviour. At such places where they would encamp he was in the habit of strolling abroad. There was nothing unusual in this; the peculiarity lay in the fact that he always returned minus some article of his baggage or personal clothing.

The matter reached a climax when one day the lay companion returned to the camp with nothing on but a pair of drawers. This was sufficient to strain the Jesuits' curiosity to breaking-point. Without further ado they asked him point-blank the reason why he had returned thus stripped. His answer was equally direct—

“You preach one way, Fathers,” said the man, “and I, another. You have the gift of eloquence, with which God has not been pleased to favour me; but I endeavour to supply the want of it by my works. I have distributed everything I brought with me among the principal Indians of the country from a persuasion that where I have gained the heads by my liberality it will be easier for you to gain the rest; and I believe the work is already in great forwardness.”

The Fathers, much struck with the man's piety,

were moved by regret that their own poverty did not permit them to follow his example. Finding themselves so admirably accompanied, it was with sorrow that a little later they received the layman's farewells. Since they now knew more of the Guaraní language, he explained, he would now return home.

The man from Ciudad Real departed, loaded with the missionaries' thanks. A short while after the leave-taking the Fathers discovered their late companion's real mission in life. The clothes had gone to the principal Indians, it was true, but the man had been receiving slaves in exchange all the while, and with these he had now set off. Sheltered beneath the wing of the unsuspecting Jesuits themselves, he had indeed gained not only the heads by his liberality, but the bodies as well.

Perhaps the unkindest feature of the situation was the suspicion with which the Indians now regarded the Jesuits. They were convinced that the Fathers had had their own share in this traffic in bodies, and it was long ere their confidence was restored. Of the many morals that might suitably be attached to this tale the most salient undoubtedly is: don't accept a companion without references! But then references were scarce in Jesuit Land in the year 1610.

A vivid picture, of which the truth need not be doubted, is painted of one of Father Ortega's early

adventures in the northern districts. He had made many converts on his journey, and, filled with hope, was encamped on a space of land that lay between two branches of a river.

As ill-luck would have it, torrential rains ensued, and the waters rose with a rapidity that soon resulted in the flooding of the land between the two streams. Fortunately for the folk caught in this extremity, the spot was fairly well wooded. So behold the padre ensconced in a tree, with many of his converts and other natives in the branches of the surrounding trunks, while night fell; lightning flashed, thunder roared, and the waters crept steadily upwards beneath their feet.

As it happened, a fever had raged among the Indians, and many of those perched in the branches were in no condition to sustain life even on terra firma. As time went on it became evident that many of these would never survive the storm. When daylight broke, the rain was still continuing, and many strange beasts came swimming along to join the human beings in their places of refuge. Among these was a gigantic boa-constrictor that endeavoured to climb the tree in which sat Father Ortega. Fortunately for the latter, the great snake slipped ere it had obtained a hold, and the current bore it away.

With the tremendous violence of a tropical outburst, the rain continued all that day, and the thunder

and lightning broke out again with the oncoming of the night. The scene was undoubtedly one that has been repeated over and over again since then—the dusky flood swirling sullenly beneath, the sharp rattle of the great drops on the leaves drowned from time to time by the crashes of the thunder, while the lightning lit up the cramped and terrified forms of the poor wretches clinging to the branches. It is the price of the gorgeous tropical blossoms and the wonderful leafy aisles, a scene such as this.

In the middle of the night the lightning illuminated the form of a swimmer who was making his way towards the tree in which crouched Father Ortega. When he arrived, and, panting, drew himself up into the branches, he had a sorry tale to tell. Many converts had already succumbed. There were a number, however, on the point of death who had not yet been received into the Church, and who were now clamouring weakly to be baptized.

Father Ortega did not hesitate for a moment. Himself a swimmer, he slid down into the sullen waters, and, assisted by the almost amphibious native, he won his way toilsomely to the spot where rested the dying men. These he baptized, and in a short while they dropped one by one, lifeless, into the flood. Perhaps never was the ceremony performed in the midst of more terrifying surroundings. When deeds such as these are weighed in the balance against the

faults with which the later Jesuits are credited by some, surely they add a formidable weight to the side of the virtues. There is no attempt at the introduction of a miracle here, moreover ; for Father Ortega received a wound in the leg from a gigantic thorn that continued to trouble him for the twenty-two remaining years of his life.

Whether Father Ortega has ever been canonised I do not know. It is not for a mere mortal to criticise the creation of saints ; but one thing seems certain, that no man's head was more fittingly patterned for a halo than his. He appears to have been one of those men who gloried in self-sacrifice and spadework, in utter contempt of material reward. It was perhaps as well that he looked for nothing of this latter ; for, as is usually the fate of his kind, his want of expectation was realised to the full !

In due course his health broke down from the force of his arduous labours and journeyings in the swamps and forests. Nevertheless, utterly oblivious of his own person, he continued his mission until in 1602 he received orders to repair to Lima. At the conclusion of his long journey to that place, a sick and weary man, he met with a reception that must have surprised even his meek soul. He was incontinently flung into prison : why, he had not the faintest idea, nor did his jailers, the officials of the Holy Office, see fit to enlighten him. Not until he had

been in prison for five months was a charge brought against him. Some irresponsible person had accused him of revealing the secrets of confession. After two years of incarceration, his accuser, afflicted by tardy remorse, retracted his charge, and the unfortunate Ortega was set at liberty.

No sooner was he free than the Viceroy of Peru made haste to avail himself of the services of so indefatigable a toiler. His fierce and intractable neighbours, the Chiriguanes, had for some while been troubling the viceregal peace of mind. His spirit undaunted, Father Ortega departed on his dangerous mission, but in this instance, bearing in mind the morose temperament of these particular Indians, success was out of the question, and Ortega failed. After this he was ordered to La Plata, where, broken down, he died at a considerable age.



DISTANT VIEW OF APOSTOLES, MISIONES TERRITORY.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MISSIONARIES AND THE SPANIARDS

Friction between the Jesuits and Spanish settlers—An unpopular division of the field of labour—Spaniards versus Portuguese—Active espousal of the Indian cause by the missionaries—The Jesuits pay for native labour—Resentment aroused by the act—Instructions received from the King of Spain—Proclamation of the Jesuits—Its effect on the Colonists—Treatment of a friendly *Cacique*—The founding of the first settlement in Paraguay—The advice of the missionaries to the Indians—Further settlements are established—A question of languages—Attitude adopted by the priests—Separation of the Indians from the Spaniards—Various intrigues—The struggle between the missionaries and their opponents—Don Hernando Arias—His adventures at a new Reduction—The helper assisted—Life of the early Jesuits—An ascetic existence—The luxuries of their successors—Some questions of progress and virtue—Quaint notions of natural history—A snake-killing sparrow—An ingenious aid to digestion—Some fabulous descriptions—The Jesuits as students of human life—Rubber in the Jesuit country—First uses to which the article was put.

It was not long after the Jesuits had become established at Asuncion that friction broke out between them and the Spanish settlers. There is no doubt in the first instance that a distinct lack of diplomacy was shown by Father Paez, who in 1602 had arrived at Salta with a commission from the General of the Order to visit all the establishments in that part of the world.

In the regulations that he drew up Father Paez seems to have ignored the deep sentiments of rivalry that existed between the Spaniards and Portuguese. Knowing that Jesuits of both nationalities worked side by side, it is possible enough that the newcomer was misled as to the actual relations that prevailed between the respective laymen. His decree ran to the effect that the country to the east of the rivers Paraguay and La Plata was to be left to the Brazilian Fathers, while the territories to the west of these rivers were to constitute the field of the Spanish Jesuits. The appointment of Portuguese priests to control Spanish soil proved unpopular to a degree, and much indignation prevailed at Asuncion, where the work of the Order was, in consequence, much hampered.

In 1604, however, a fresh influx of Spanish Jesuits into Asuncion occurred. Very soon afterwards the first seeds of real dissension fructified. The Fathers began by protesting against the oppression of the Indians at the hands of the white men. This, of course, was hotly resented by the accused parties, and a coolness sprang up between the Jesuits and both rival clergy and laymen, in the course of which the Fathers were accused of unduly favouring the Indians.

A similar state of affairs had sprung into existence at Córdoba. There, too, the Jesuits had pleaded

the cause of the Indians with a fervour that alarmed those who, owning lands, had need of cheap labour to till them. A little later the Jesuits of this district definitely burned the last boat of friendship that had ferried between them and the others. They took it upon themselves to pay Indians for labour rendered. A howl of execration went up on the spot, and from that time arose a bitterness that continued to a greater or lesser extent during the whole period of the Jesuits' stay in South America.

So deep did this sentiment of hostility become, that when in 1609 Father Torrez set out for Concepcion it was only the intervention of the Governor of the Province that secured him admission to the place. Scarcely had he succeeded in pacifying the inhabitants of the town when he was invited by the Governor and Bishop of Asuncion to proceed to that centre. The heads of the civil and ecclesiastical bodies, it appeared, had just received a letter from the King of Spain, commanding that the Indians were to be subdued by religion rather than by the sword, and that missionaries were to be employed for that purpose. Father Torrez answered the call immediately, and the mission work among the Indians in the neighbourhood of Asuncion was begun again in earnest. The inevitable result manifested itself at once. The inhabitants, in whose interests it lay that the Guaranís should remain mere slaves, clamoured

fiercely against the methods of these inconsiderate newcomers.

In the meanwhile, the Jesuits at Villarica, hoping to stem the hostility directed against them, had issued an official proclamation—

“We do not mean,” said they, “to oppose those advantages you may draw from the Indians in a lawful manner; but you know it never was the King’s intention that you should consider them as slaves, and that, besides, the law of God strictly forbids it. As to those we are commissioned to gain over to Jesus Christ, and upon whom you can have no claim, since they were never conquered by force of arms, our design is: first to labour to make them men, that we may be the better able to make them Christians. We shall then endeavour to induce them, from a view to their own interest, to submit cheerfully to the King our Sovereign, and hope, with God’s blessing, our endeavours will be crowned with success. We do not think it lawful to make any attempt upon their liberties, to which they have a natural and incontestable right; but we will endeavour to make them sensible that they render their freedom prejudicial to themselves by making a bad use of it, and to teach them to restrain it within just bounds. We flatter ourselves with being able to make them discover such great advantages in that dependence, in which all civilised nations live, and in yielding

obedience to a Prince who only desires to be their protector and their father, and procure them the inestimable blessing of knowing the true God, that they will submit to the yoke with joy, and bless the day they became his subjects."

The effect of this proclamation was to increase, rather than to diminish, the animosity against the Jesuits. The inhabitants of the town were shortly given an opportunity of demonstrating this. When the missionaries desired to start on an expedition through the surrounding country guides were flatly refused them. Persisting in their attempt, the Jesuits made their application to the *Cacique* of the first place they intended to visit. In response the *Cacique* came in person. The unfortunate man was forthwith loaded with irons by the Spaniards, and was flung into prison, where he doubtless had food for meditation on the manner of his reception. The missionaries, however, after some strenuous efforts, succeeded in effecting the *Cacique's* release, and set off in company with him.

It was on this occasion, by the way, after the *Cacique* had departed, that the cunning of the man from Ciudad Real, already referred to, manifested itself, and that a number of slaves were purchased almost beneath the eyes of the unsuspecting missionaries. It was on this occasion, too, that was founded the first settlement in Paraguay, Loreto. This

effected, the Jesuits marched about eighty leagues through the country, explaining to the Indians how greatly to their interest it was that they should unite together in order to defend their freedom and at the same time to obtain instruction.

From that time the material influence of the Jesuits may be said to date. The influx of Indians rapidly became too great for a single settlement, and another, that of San Ignacio, was established close by. Soon afterwards a third and fourth were founded.

It was scarcely to be expected that the Spanish settlers, who for their part had purely material ends in view, should welcome the programme which the Jesuits now began to develop. It soon became clear enough that one of the principal aims of the latter was to preserve the Guaranís from all contact with the secular lords of the soil. To this end they made no attempt to instruct the Indians in the Spanish language, and after a while actively discouraged any attempt of the kind. Guaraní, in course of time elaborated and embellished by the Fathers, remained the speech of the mission settlements, or Reductions, as they were termed.

No Spaniard, moreover, unless he came on official business, was permitted even to visit the Reductions, and every avenue of intercourse between them and the Indians was closed. The Spaniards,

for their part, were in no mood to look upon such slights, however well intentioned, with complacency. Not only was their dignity hurt, but their material prosperity as well—and it is not to be denied that the damaged items constitute two of the most powerful human factors, whether whole or wounded.

It is lamentable to have to confess it, but in the circumstances there is no doubt that, had a campaign of abuse and not a little calumny not been started against the unpopular missionaries, the nature of the Spanish settlers would scarcely have been human. Certainly it must have irritated the minds of those who had entered the country for the sake of riches to find the Jesuits interposing their subtle force between themselves and the dusky folk who should have been their slaves.

No opportunity was lost to put an end to this new and unpleasant situation. Thus when in 1613 Don Francisco Alfaro came to Asuncion in his character of Royal Visitor he found himself within a seething cauldron of discontent. Ere his arrival he had published a royal decree concerning the better treatment of the Indians by the Spaniards. Now that they had him in their midst the principal inhabitants of Asuncion, many of whom were related to the first families of Spain, determined to improve the occasion. They pointed out to him that “by depriving them of the services of the Indians, or

reducing them to the limits mentioned in his proclamation, they should be absolutely disabled from paying the King what His Majesty required of them." Now here was a pretty kettle of fish! The Visitor began to regret his haste in the matter of proclamations. In the first place, the relatives of important families of Spain were not to be ignored in an age when promotion lay even more than now at the mercy of favour, and when, owing to the tardy habits of galleons, a homeward-bound inimical tale-bearer had matters his own way for an unfairly long period of time. Secondly, the hint concerning dues and taxes was bringing the matter unpleasantly near home. Without a doubt the King's intentions were philanthropical; but it was not the official's part to put them to the test by a shortage of gold from the lands of the Indies in the royal coffers!

The Visitor, doubtless wise in his generation, decided to take no risk. He amended the proclamation, and made concessions to the secular landowners which went far to relieve their anxiety, although they were the cause of considerable bodily discomfort to the Indians in the vicinity. But, although the Spaniards had obtained the better of the contest for the time being, they were by no means appeased so far as the Jesuits were concerned. No sooner had the Visitor departed than such a storm of hostility was aroused against the Fathers that they were



A TYPICAL VIEW IN MISIONES TERRITORY.

obliged to forsake their college at Asuncion for a while, and to retire into the country.

The episode was one of the first of a series of contests that continued intermittently for more than a century and a half. In these the Jesuits were opposed not only by the laymen, but frequently enough by the priests of other orders. On the whole, it must be admitted that they proved remarkably well able to take care of themselves. Occasionally, indeed, they were not above employing a similar class of weapon to that with which they were attacked. No undue amount of blame should be cast upon them for this. With the brood of helpless Indians beneath their wings, they were at bay, and, however much their actions may have been misconstrued at the time, history has now proved clearly enough that they struck for the benefit of their flock rather than for themselves.

To the Homeric contest that occurred between the Order and Bishop Cardenas when the missions were fully matured I do not intend to refer here, since Mr. Cunninghame Graham has the matter so fully and lucidly on record in his work. It was on this occasion, however, that the high-water mark of mutual animosity was reached.

It must not, of course, be imagined that all officials were necessarily unfriendly in their sentiments towards the Jesuits. It frequently happened,

on the contrary, that they found themselves under the protection of powerful men who, in the opinion of many, went too far out of their way to serve them.

Thus in 1615, only two years after the noteworthy advent of the Visitor, Father Torrez was succeeded by Father Pedro de Onate. Under the latter was Father Gonzalez, who was fortunate in the possession of relatives in high places. This particular missionary, it is said, met with surprising success in founding a Reduction at Itapua, sixty leagues from Asuncion. His sister, as it happened, had married Don Hernando Arias, who for the second time had been appointed to the governorship of Paraguay, and who, more popularly known as Hernandarias, has attained to no small place in history.

Don Hernando Arias, rejoicing greatly at the success of his brother-in-law, determined to further his cause by means of active assistance. He sent word to the enthusiastic missionary that he intended paying him a visit of state at his new settlement. Father Gonzalez, foreseeing the complications that were likely to ensue, sent in reply a hasty message expressing his gratitude, but strongly deprecating the idea of the proposed trip.

Hernando Arias, whose character for resolution has come down the ages, had no intention of allow-

ing his plan to be deterred by any objection such as this. Like many great men of all periods, he was determined to help, quite regardless of whether his assistance was required or not. So he set out with fifty soldiers, and arrived at the new settlement of Itapua. His visit to the mission station itself was a success. The priest had been able to convince his converts of the friendly intentions of the alarming intruders, and Hernando Arias was soon engaged in disposing of the offices of the new Reduction, paying compliments here and there, and behaving in the genial fashion peculiar to one who comes out to inspect with the intention of praising.

While these amenities had been proceeding, a scene of a very different kind was taking place in the forests surrounding the settlement, where lived the Indians who had not yet been brought within the fold of the missionaries. These had no particular reason to connect the appearance of Spanish soldiers with any ceremony of friendship. To them, on the contrary, a company of the kind represented a menace to be staved off by nothing less than violent action.

So, while the governor was expressing his unqualified approval of the new work undertaken, the forest aisles without were rapidly filling with the dusky forms of armed and naked men. When the time for departure came the important visitor found

his way blocked by hordes of hostile Guaranís who were prepared to dispute his passage. Hernandarias, a tried warrior, would undoubtedly have attempted to cut his way through, with what success is more than doubtful. But his brother-in-law, the missionary, interposed, and beneath the force of his eloquence the hostile Guaranís melted away, and the forest paths became clear again. It was in all probability in a thoughtful mood that the governor began his homeward march.

It may be taken for granted that the circumstances of these two brothers-in-law differed as widely as is possible to conceive. The life of the early Jesuits was notably devoid of any comforts of the type that is now eloquently but vulgarly described as beer and skittles. Father Montoya has left an emphatic record on the point.

“What houses are these that the clergy inhabit? A few miserable straw huts. What furniture do they possess? The breviary and manual to baptize and to administer the Sacraments. What is their nourishment? Mandioca root, beans, and vegetables; and the majesty of God is witness that in native villages they have passed twenty-four hours without even partaking of roots, in order not to beg these from the Indians, and thus become a burden to them.”

According to some authorities, the successors of these ascetic priests, when the various settlements

were firmly established, led a life very different from this precarious existence. They fed on the fat of the land ; instead of laying their tired bodies on the soil, they reposed in luxurious beds ; where the first missionaries had tramped on foot through the forest, these others never deigned to proceed beyond the limits of their own towns unless it were on horses richly caparisoned ; and each, moreover, when he remained at home, was surrounded by an imposing retinue of servants.

It is likely enough that much of this has some foundation in truth. In any case, there would seem no particular reason why the Jesuits should restrict their menu to roots when other fare was available, nor why they should have slept on the ground when beds were ready at hand to receive them. To those who laid no claim to those rare qualities which might be termed the highest specialities of sainthood, horses and servants were indispensable necessities of the age. They still remain so to a certain degree. That the Jesuit methods of life should alter themselves was inevitable in view of the material progress of the land. Even now there are bishops, laymen, and company-promoters who ride in motor-cars—a species of progress entirely unknown to their ancestors or to their early selves. But surely none would allege that this particular species of progress has affected the virtues and vices of any of the three.

It has been amply proved that the interest taken by the early Jesuits in the land and people of their adoption was an intelligent one. Yet ere they had become fully accustomed to the country many of its curiosities and marvels seem to have led them to strange conclusions. Occasionally we are given some startling impressions.

Their notions concerning natural history were, to say the least of it, vague and exotic. Here are some instances which, I think, must be taken with a grain of salt, unless the habits of the native fauna have changed considerably in the interval. Father Charlevoix himself is responsible for the following :—

“Among the different kinds of sparrows found in these provinces, most of which are the size of our blackbirds, there is a very pretty one, called *Macagua*. This little creature is very fond of the flesh of vipers, against whom, for this reason, he wages a continual war. As soon, therefore, as he spies one of these reptiles, he whips his head under his wing, and gathers himself into a round ball, without the least appearance of life or motion ; he does not, however, cover his eyes so entirely, but what he may peep through the feathers of his wing, and observe the motions of his game, which he suffers to approach without stirring, till he finds it near enough to receive a stroke of his bill, which he then suddenly discharges at it. The viper immediately returns the

compliment with another of his tongue; but the minute the sparrow finds himself wounded, he flies to his herb, eats some of it, and is instantly cured. He then returns to the charge, and has recourse to his herb, every time the viper stings him. This conflict lasts till the viper, destitute of the same resource, has lost all his blood. As soon as the reptile is dead, the sparrow falls to work upon the carcase, and concludes the feast with a new dose of his antidote."

This breed of intellectual sparrows, alas! has quite died out. It was perhaps fortunate for them that they were not matched against the great snakes of whom the same authority speaks. These enormous reptiles avenged their smaller brethren's death by making use of other birds in turn. When fully gorged and uncomfortably swollen, hear the process that ensued:—

"On this occasion the monster turns up his belly to the sun, whose heat makes it putrefy; the worms then breed in it, and the birds, coming to their assistance, feed upon a superfluity which otherwise would most certainly kill him: the patient takes care not to let the birds go too great lengths, and in a short time after this extraordinary operation finds himself as well as ever."

All this is very unpleasant, of course, although sufficiently admirable as a system of co-operative

digestion. But the even tenor of the cure was occasionally rudely broken into. It sometimes happened "that the skin of the serpent closes upon the branches of trees upon which he has been in too great haste to station himself; this is a scrape out of which he must find it a much more difficult matter to extricate himself than the former."

Mutual aid, as a matter of fact, was carried on to a notable extent by the animals of the period. There was another bird, a kindly little sparrow who was wont to attend to the teeth of the crocodiles, and to clean them when they had become choked with fish. But an evil genius used occasionally to be present at this operation in the shape of another species of bird of unduly greedy and intrusive habits, who "as soon as he sees the monster prepare for this operation by distending his jaws, immediately rushes into his stomach, in order to prey upon his entrails"—a disturbance that must have caused much annoyance to the genuine and conscientious tooth-attendant.

There is also a fervid account of a beast with two stomachs—"one of which serves him as a store-house"—whose description otherwise answers to that of the modern tapir. It is about this animal that it is said that, "when he finds himself overstocked with blood, he opens one of his veins with the point of a reed, and that it is from him that



THE JESUIT BATH, APOSTOLES.

the Indians have learned the use of the same operation."

To turn from these intimate and rather repulsive details to the world of mild sport, the reader learns with some amazement that the partridges "are in such plenty, especially in the vast plains that lie between Buenos Aires and Tucuman, that travellers take them, like fish, with a line without being obliged to alight from their horses or carriages."

The last statement gives some clue to this extraordinary jumble of fancy and fact. The line, of course, was the native sling with its weighty balls attached, the *boleadores*, with which an expert may well enough bring down a running bird. But the *boleadores* are not to be slung from the interior of a carriage. It may be taken for granted, moreover, that each bird caused its pursuer no little pains and trouble ere it fell a victim.

The question arises: did these old Jesuits themselves believe in these marvellous feats of nature that they recorded? It is possible enough that they did; for the greater part of the information was obtained from hearsay. If so, it is clear enough that the Fathers, though profound students of human nature, were poor judges of the habits of the beasts.

Concerning the flora of the land their theories were less exuberant. Among their notes is an interesting remark to the effect that between the

rivers Paraguay and Alto Paraná the country "is full of trees distilling a gum which the inhabitants form into balls, so light and elastic that they serve to play with. But what renders them still more valuable is a virtue they are said to possess of curing the dysentery."

In these practical days of stocks and shares, and booms in rubber, it is instructive to learn the first uses to which this article apparently was ever put. A dose of rubber as a remedy for dysentery! Taken in sufficient quantities, the effects must have been amazing. Indeed, they probably ended in a permanent cure for all the ills of the flesh.

CHAPTER XIV

SOME FEATURES OF A MISSION TOWN

Growing power of the Jesuits—The mission towns—A methodical community—Uniformity of urban patterns—Views of a traveller—Situation of the main buildings—Streets and houses—The churches of the Reductions—A comparison with those of Spain and Peru—Work of the Indians—Emulation in construction—Cemeteries—Chapels—Fortifications of the outlying Reductions—The guarding of the towns—Night patrols—The Jesuit navy—Its duties and achievements—The military force—Equipment and manœuvres of the troops—Duties and authority of the priests—Some rules and allegations—Civil posts of the towns—Various Guaraní officials—Their limitations—Indian inspectors of morality—Their duties and power—Costume of the ordinary inhabitants—A modern criticism—The schools of the Reductions—The Latin and Spanish tongues—Curious species of knowledge—The King of Spain decrees the compulsory learning of Spanish—Reply of the Jesuits—How the Guaraní speech has been preserved.

WE have followed the Jesuits at the time when they spread themselves, singly and in pairs, through the country, tiny atoms of civilisation tossed by the chance waves of the crude barbarism that abounded in the depths of the swamps and forests. Once established, the power of their influence had gained with an amazing rapidity. With towns founded and populated by tens of thousands of converts, with the days parcelled out into periods of work, prayer, and

play, according to the direction of the Fathers, we see them entering on their second phase, that of assured power and prosperity.

An almost passionate love for methodical methods seems to have been characteristic of the Order. Its adherents undoubtedly entertained strong views on uniformity of pattern, a scheme which they carried out in practice to a curious degree. Each Jesuit town was as nearly the replica of another as it was possible for human endeavour to make it. A traveller who journeyed through the districts of the Misiones during their flourishing period comments quaintly upon this characteristic. So exactly does one town resemble another, he says, that the sensation on arriving at each of the various centres is that the original has stolen a march on the wayfarer and has overtaken him to place itself in his path on every later occasion of the kind.

In the centre of each Reduction was the Plaza, or square, a wide extent of open space upon which the principal buildings gave. Here was the church, facing north, with the college of the Fathers by its side, and beyond this latter the burial-ground. Here, too, was the school-building and the arsenal, where the arms and ammunition were stored.

The streets of the Indian inhabitants were rectangularly designed, and extended from east to west. The houses in these were held to be "as convenient,

as neat, and as well furnished as those of the common Spaniards." Although in the first place constructed of more primitive materials, these were in course of time erected solidly of stone and roofed by tiles.

The most notable feature of each town was the church. Here alone was rivalry permitted between the various Reductions, a rivalry that manifested itself in individual effort and in no small degree of originality. For these churches, to which I have already referred, the Jesuits claimed with much pride and no little reason that the buildings would not disgrace the greatest cities of Spain or Peru, either in regard to the beauty of their structure or the richness and good taste of their sacred vessels and ornaments of every kind. The edifices were built by the Indians from the designs furnished by the missionaries. An old writer, speaking of these, says: "The Spaniards themselves are surprised to see them so magnificent, and so rich in plate, linen, and ornaments. It is, indeed, the only subject of emulation between the Reductions, some of whom have been known to rebuild their churches from the very foundations, merely to put them on a level with others, and even deprive themselves of the necessities of life to effect it."

In the case of all the towns the cemetery was spacious, and was intersected by walks bordered with orange and lemon trees. The middle one of these

led to a chapel which was wont to be planted about with cypress and palm trees, and which was separated from the general burial-ground by means of low walls.

There were other chapels, set about the outskirts of the town, which served as stations for the frequent religious processions. One of these chapels was wont to form the terminus of each street, which was furnished beyond with a cross at either end, in front of which the processions would make a halt.

In view of the number of enemies possessed by the Order it was essential to guard against surprise. The houses of those Reductions most exposed to danger were protected by ditches and formidable palisades, while all night long the streets were guarded by patrols which relieved each other from time to time. These detachments served a double purpose; for, in addition to their strictly military duties, it was their custom to prevent the indiscriminate strolling of the more irresponsible members of the towns at night. The Jesuits believed in early hours, and rigidly enforced their theory.

In the case of those Reductions which were situated on the bank of a river an added precaution against surprise was adopted. At night the river front of each of these would be guarded by canoes, which were paddled silently to and fro in front of the sleeping town. For the Jesuits in a sense might be said to have been possessed of their navy, as well as of their

commercial fleet, which plied to and fro on the surface of the great streams. And this canoe navy of theirs did not invariably confine itself to mere police work. On more than one occasion it joined in pitched battle with the equally light vessels of the mameluke flotillas, and acquitted itself creditably enough in the fight.

A species of conscription, moreover, was encouraged, and every town kept up its own force of cavalry and infantry. At the height of its prosperity the infantry appear to have been laden with a perfect battery of arms. According to a Jesuit authority each man carried a battle-axe, bow and arrows, sling, sword and musket. The cavalryman, besides sabre and lance, bore a musket, as it sometimes fell to his lot to fight on foot. There were also batteries of field-pieces and heavy artillery, all these weapons, astonishing to relate, being manufactured at the missions.

Every Monday these troops were wont to exercise in the Plaza, where they must undoubtedly have made a brave enough show, since there was no lack of military trappings, and the officers ruffled it with the best in their gold-and-silver-laced uniforms. Indeed, as an organisation, the Jesuit army was as astonishing as all the rest. Each of the towns was usually in the charge of two Jesuits. The senior of these was wont to be a man of experience. His duties comprised those of a parish priest, to which

was added no small amount of secular power necessary for the control of the Indians. In his house lived half a dozen children who were specially designed for the service of the Church, and the establishment was conducted on the model of a convent, everything being done by sound of bell.

By the rules of the Order no woman was permitted to enter the house of the priest. The enemies of the Jesuits were wont to affirm that in many cases this law stood as nothing beyond a dead letter, and gave the missionaries credit for numerous and populous families. Here and there, no doubt, there was cause for these reports. Without taking an unnecessarily pessimistic view of human morality, it would have been strange had nothing of the sort occurred throughout the entire region governed by the missionaries. One has merely to peruse the newspapers of all countries in order to be convinced that the general situation has altered remarkably little to this day. To brand the Jesuits, however, or any other sect of the clergy, by the acts of some black sheep among their number would be unreasonable in the extreme.

The senior priest was assisted by a junior, who was usually a young priest recently arrived from Europe or from the university of Córdoba, the local headquarters of the Order. It was his part to assist his colleague, while he himself was learning the



RAILWAY EXTENSION TO POSADAS, EMBANKMENT IN COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Guaraní language and familiarising himself with the field of his labours. Each mission, moreover, was under the supervision of a Superior, who was constantly employed in travelling to and fro and in visiting the parishes under his care.

All the civil offices of these towns were held by Guaranís. Every post of the kind that was to be met with in a Spanish town had its equivalent here. There was a *cacique* in each who stood as the governor-in-chief—although, of course, subject to the authority of the priests. There were *corregidores*, *regidores*, and *alcaldes*, all elected by the Indians themselves, assisted by the advice of the priests.

These officers were distinguished from the rest by a handsome costume. Willing and enthusiastic though they proved themselves, the Fathers soon found it unwise to lay too much trust in the capacity and discretion of these. They were thus not permitted to decide anything of importance, nor to inflict any punishment, without the sanction of the priests. According to the missionaries it was seldom necessary to inflict one of the severe punishments, the general range of which included prayers, fasting, confinement, and, occasionally, flogging.

In addition to these officials, native inspectors of morality were appointed. It was their duty to supervise the behaviour of the converts, and the punishments dealt out to those who slipped from

the paths of the particular virtues guarded by the inspectors were more elaborate than the rest. The culprit was clothed in penitential garb, and conducted to the church, where he made a public confession of his sin. After this he was taken to the Plaza, and was there whipped.

The dress of the ordinary inhabitant of the Jesuit towns consisted of a waistcoat and breeches, above which a frock of white cloth hung to below the knee. When this frock was of coloured material it stood as a mark of distinction, and was an advertisement of some especial merit in the wearer. The women wore petticoats and armless chemises girt at the waist, with hair plaited into one or two tails, and adorned with a crimson flower. According to Richard Burton, who certainly entertained no love for the Jesuits or their ways, "both sexes looked like babies." This seems by no means improbable. Indeed, considering the original nature and appearance of the Guaranís, few higher compliments could have been paid to the influence of their teachers.

The missions once established, it was necessary, of course, for the purposes of the Jesuits that the Indians should be under their direction from their tenderest years upwards. To this end each Reduction was provided with two schools. In the first the children learned to read and write. The second provided a blend of instruction and amuse-

ment. In this the children were taught to dance, sing, and to play upon the instruments used in divine service. "This," says a Jesuit chronicler, "they do, like the birds, by instinct."

A certain number were instructed in Latin; but the knowledge attained here was purely superficial, since the actual acquaintance of the students with the tongue was limited to reading and pronouncing it correctly. Such as it was, it seems to have served efficiently for the purposes of ritual. Even at Buenos Aires, we are told, Father Cattaneo was surprised to see a young Indian ascend the pulpit in the refectory of the college in order to read at meal-time; but more so to hear him read both the Latin and Spanish languages as well as if he were perfectly well acquainted with both. In point of fact, of course, the reader was profoundly ignorant of the actual sense of the words he spoke.

It has already been explained how the missionaries, in order to prevent the remotest chance of intercourse between their converts and the Spaniards, took steps to keep the former in ignorance of the Castilian tongue. Outside the missions, as may be imagined, this procedure met with small favour. Occasionally an endeavour was made to force the hands of the Fathers on this point. Thus as late as 1743 Philip v. of Spain issued a decree to the effect that all the Guaranís should be taught Spanish.

The Jesuits bowed down before the order, as a willow tree bends in the face of a passing squall. They promised that this thing should be attempted. At the same time they remarked of the Guaranís that, "considering their great reluctance to learn this language, the execution of His Majesty's order will, it is probable, be attended with very great difficulties." Needless to say, the difficulties proved insuperable. The survival of the Guaraní tongue in Misiones and Southern Paraguay is, of course, alone due to those long-past efforts of the Jesuits, otherwise it would long since have gone the way of those other languages of the neighbouring districts whose speakers have for so long been directly brought into touch with Spanish civilisation.

CHAPTER XV

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE INDIANS

Mental progress compared with material advancement—Influences of the converts' surroundings—The native dullness of wit—Their natural characteristics—The missionaries send to the bishops of Peru for advice—An evasive reply—Procedure adopted by the Jesuits—Want of initiative in the Indians—Precautions of the priests—Some everyday duties at the Reductions—Occasional backslidings of the converts—Emotional development of the Indians—How the new fervour was utilised—Enthusiastic views of the Bishop of Buenos Aires—Regulations concerning sex—The religious day of the settlements—Devotion and work dovetailed—The procession to the fields—A ceremonial prelude to labour—The images of saints and their care—Burton's description of the procedure—A comparison of periods—Festal occasions—The feast of the patron saint—Sports and public rejoicings—The procession of the Sacrament—Magnificence of the function—Curious decorations—Demonstrations on the occasion of a bishop's visit—Military and religious pomp—Attitude of the Jesuits towards the royal officials—Reasons why it was necessary for the missions to be secluded—The Guaranís and devotion—Care of the children—Their instruction—Services at the beginning and end of the day.

HAVING dealt with the manner of their dwellings, it is high time to discuss the native inhabitants themselves of these orderly towns that dotted the land of the Jesuits. That the mental progress of the Indians continued in the same ratio as the material advancement of their cities was not to be expected

in the circumstances. According to the plan of the missionaries it was necessary that the surroundings of the dusky converts should from the force of their impressions lead the way, and point out the road to a higher civilisation. Thus the shell of humanity remained always more or less in advance of its tenants—a rather curious state of affairs that was productive, nevertheless, of very practical results.

It must be admitted that the first attempts of the missionaries on the minds of their converts met with a discouraging response. The amenities of their surroundings in the first instance gratified the senses of the Guaranís, and rendered them very content. They had, moreover, suffered baptism, and allowed themselves to be proclaimed as Christians. For a considerable while progress was confined merely to these outward evidences, and the mental condition of the Indians remained much as it had been in their primitive state.

Father Charlevoix has it that the native dullness of wit appeared to the first missionaries to fall little short of downright stupidity. For a time even these ardent folk felt some discouragement, and took to wondering as to the extent of those confused depths, beneath which was held to lie the spark which it was their profession to draw in flame to the surface. The ceremony of baptism appeared to have left the Indians much as they were before, beings who stared

in heavy gratification at the churches and secular buildings, which they themselves had contrived in a fashion utterly incomprehensible to their own minds, whose moral views depended on nothing beyond the absence or presence of opportunity, whose love for the drunkenness produced by the fermented liquor of the algarrobo bean was but loosely shaken, and whose arithmetic ended at the laboured counting of fingers and toes.

In their perplexity the missionaries sent to the bishops of Peru for advice. In the circumstances they desired to know whether it was advisable to administer to these yet uncouth folk any other sacrament but that of baptism. The question apparently came as something of a poser to the bishops of Peru, who were loth to assume too much responsibility in the affair. From their council at Lima they contented themselves with sending a reply to the effect that the missionaries should be very cautious in the manner in which they administered the other sacraments. Thus the Jesuits were left to their own devices. As a result, in the early days the Indians were not admitted to Communion except at the hour of death, and even then the Sacrament was only administered to those who had withstood a test of seven years since their baptism.

The Guaranís, in fact, though willing enough to be led, proved themselves entirely devoid of initiative.

In many respects there is no doubt that the Jesuits preferred this frame of mind to one more likely to be productive of originality and individual impulse. But, although the material on which they worked was conveniently plastic, this very characteristic involved the unremitting supervision of the heads of the Reductions. This was necessary in industrial as well as in religious affairs.

“The most laborious part,” says Don Antonio de Ulloa, “of the duty belonging to the priests is to assist personally the Chacras or plantations of the Indians; and in this they are remarkably sedulous in order to prevent the ill-consequences of that slothful disposition so natural to the Guaranís, who, were they not frequently roused and stimulated by the presence of the priest, would abandon their work, or at least perform it in a very superficial manner. He also attends at the public slaughter-house when, every day, they kill some of the cattle, large herds of which are kept for the public use by the Indians. The flesh of these beasts is dealt out by the priests, proportionable to the number of persons each family consists of, so that every one has a sufficiency to supply the calls of nature, but nothing for waste. He also visits the sick to see that they want for nothing, and are attended with that care and tenderness their condition requires. These charitable employments take up so great a part of the day as often to

leave him no time for assisting the Father coadjutor in the service of the Church. . . . It is not to be doubted but that the interior government of the Reductions depends chiefly upon the missionaries. The limited understanding of the neophytes requires that they should enter into all their affairs, and direct them in their temporal as well as their spiritual concerns."

Seeing that each Reduction with its thousands of inhabitants was served by no more than two Jesuits, there can be no doubt that the nature of these posts was sufficiently arduous. Within the first couple of decades of the establishment of these centres the missionaries claimed for the Indians that they had renounced all their grosser vices. In this view they erred on the optimistic side. The habits of centuries were not to be eliminated in a score of years, and the machinations of the witch-doctors, who, finding their profession endangered, redoubled their efforts, continued a source of danger for some while.

There were periods indeed when, their own particular species of old Adam working within them, the Guaranís flung off every shred of their newly found devotion. At such times chaos reigned in the Reductions, while the sheep of the flock disported themselves as rank goats, and, reverting to their ancient practices, confounded themselves in orgies, in spite of the protests and endeavours of the

missionaries. As the settlements progressed, however, these episodes became more rare, and in the end ceased entirely.

Considering the main object of the Jesuit Reductions, it is only fitting that the religious side of the Indian life should be dealt with first. Notwithstanding the exceptional paucity of instincts of the kind that had characterised their primitive state, it was a remarkably short while ere the Guaranís became zealous church folk. Having attained to this point, they rapidly developed emotions to which their race in the past had been a stranger. There is not the least reason to doubt the following account from a Jesuit source :—

“The attention with which they listen to the instructions and exhortations of their pastors almost surpasses belief, and during the act of contrition with which both instructions and exhortations are always concluded, and which is pronounced with a loud voice, they sob and sigh, and would publicly confess their faults, did not these missionaries employ all their authority to prevent it.”

Having once been brought to this frame of mind, which curiously resembles that of many modern converts to the newer European denominations, the rest was easy. The fervour of the natives was employed as an effective agent for the destruction of their besetting fault of drunkenness, and upon the

nature of the old Guaraní was built the foundation for a new man.

At this prosperous period the claims of the missionaries on behalf of the morality of their congregations suffer a little from an undue degree of enthusiasm. But their testimony is not without support on sufficiently weighty authority elsewhere. Don Pedro Faxardo, Bishop of Buenos Aires, for instance, writing to the King of Spain on the subject of the missions, stated his belief that there was no single mortal sin committed in any of these towns in the course of a whole twelvemonth. A daring advertisement, this! One, indeed, which could only have been made in the age when virtues and vices were considered deserving of as much publicity as is now enjoyed by soaps and patent medicines.

Although the grounds for the Bishop's claim may have been as slender as the majority of others of the kind, it is certain enough that no sin, mortal or otherwise, was committed by the Indians on account of a want of precaution on the part of their spiritual fathers. The two sexes were rarely permitted to intermingle, and that never at haphazard. Even in the churches a passage down the middle of the building separated the male and female portions of the congregation. As a matter of fact, the system of classification was carried far beyond this. The members of either sex were divided into different

classes according to their ages, and each class was provided with its inspectors, whose duty it was to see that all those under their care conducted themselves with the strictest propriety. Those in charge of the children carried long rods, which they were instructed to employ upon the small persons of the youthful should the occasion for correction arise.

The religious day of the Jesuit towns was rigidly mapped out. Work and worship were made to blend to a curious degree. Thus, the morning's devotion concluded, the men and women would proceed to their labours in the fields. But not with the accustomed listless gait of the agricultural toiler. Even this usually insignificant event was made the occasion for a ceremony. The Guaranís went out in procession to the sound of music, reed and string instruments blending with their voices as they chanted the psalms on their way, halting now and again to worship in front of a chapel ere they finally reached the scene of their labours.

At other times the music would be more martial. Drums would beat, and flutes would blow, and at the forefront of the company would be the image of a saint carried on high. When they arrived at the spot where the day's work was to begin, they would lower the image with great care, and place it tenderly in the shade of the trees. Because their own bodies were exposed to the fierce sunrays was no reason

why that of the saint should suffer. Besides, for all I know, it may have been made of wax, in which case they had a very practical reason for this warm consideration !

“The Guaranís,” says Burton, “were taught by their Fathers to hear and to obey like schoolboys, and their lives were divided between the chapel and farm-work. Their tasks were changed by Jesuit art into a kind of religious rejoicing, a childish opera. They marched afield to the sound of fiddles, while the hoe was plied to the voice of psalmody. . . . Everything, pleasures as well as labours, meals and prayers, was regulated and organised by the Fathers. The saint’s day was duly celebrated with feasting, dancing, drinking, tournaments, bull-baiting, and cock-fighting. . . . The Fathers wore their golden copes ; the children, robed in white, swung their censers, and the faithful paced in complacent ranks with measured steps under the perfumed shade of the orange trees.”

Now this—with the exception of the statement concerning the drinking by the Guaranís on saints’ days, a procedure that was emphatically discouraged by the missionaries—renders an accurate enough account of some of the methods of life in the Jesuit settlements. I hold no brief for the Jesuits, and this small book is certainly written in no controversial spirit, but it is a little difficult to understand what genuine complaint Burton had against this state of

affairs, even as he describes it. Surely none can deny that a day spent in this fashion was preferable to the bloodthirsty rites and brutish orgies that were formerly characteristic of the race.

It must be admitted that, in order to fit in with the temperament of the Guaranís, the outward nature of these festivals remained throughout of a somewhat crude and barbaric nature. One of the most important of these was held at each town on the day sacred to its patron saint. On such occasions invitations were wont to be sent to the inhabitants of the neighbouring Reductions, and these would attend in imposing numbers and state, their native officers, in full uniform, riding on horseback.

The ceremonies began on the eve of the holiday, when a military procession was held, in which the chief figure was that of the Alfarez, who was mounted on a richly caparisoned steed, and rode under a magnificent canopy. To the strains of drums and martial music the Indian troops would parade the city, and would ultimately come to a halt before the church, where the mounted men alighted, and the Alfarez took his seat in a chapel specially prepared for his reception. The first vespers were then said, after which the children danced in the Plaza; then, when night had fallen, the occasion was marked by bonfires and illuminated streets.

The next day, after the conclusion of High Mass

and some other services, was devoted to lighter forms of entertainments and to various sports. At these the women were permitted to attend only in the character of spectators. The missionaries, assisted by all the chiefs and officers, directed the affair, maintained order, distributed the prizes, and gave the signal for the breaking up of the assembly. According to the Jesuits, such functions as these were essential to the welfare of the Guaranís. "The public rejoicings which they are from time to time permitted to make," says Father Charlevoix, "appeared necessary to the missionaries, as well to preserve their health as to keep up among them an air of cheerfulness and good-humour."

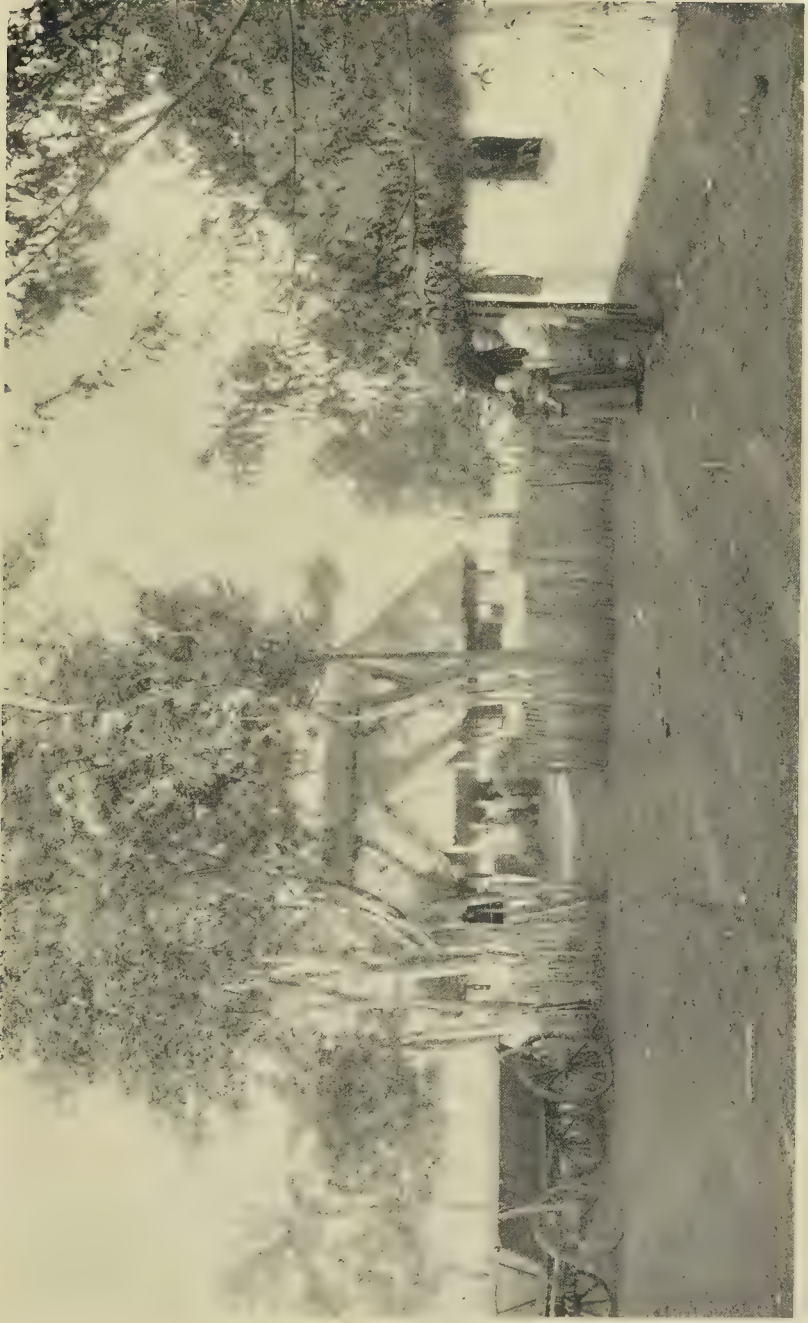
On the whole, such festivals appear to have been well managed, and the behaviour of the Indians restrained within the bounds of order and decency. Nevertheless it is certain enough that, especially in the earlier days of the settlements, there were occasions of the kind which taxed to the utmost the authority and tact of the Jesuits. In certain circumstances no man was a greater adept than the Guaraní in taking an ell where he had been given an inch, and, until he had been sufficiently trained, nothing was calculated to render him more irresponsible than the excitement attending one of these functions.

But the most imposing of the many solemnities customary in Jesuit Land was that of the procession

of the Sacrament. In the first part of this book I have already alluded to a portion of this ceremony, and to the extraordinary collection of beasts, birds, and fishes that were brought to the spot to give unwilling assistance. Of the magnificence of these processions both Jesuits and Indians were very proud, and it was claimed for them that in scarcely any other part of the world was anything to be met with comparable to their state, while the dancing which occurred was said to be far superior to that seen in the Province of Quito. The idea of decoration here was decidedly comprehensive, for amongst the tigers, flowers, birds, arches, fishes, garlands, and other festal objects was to be seen the flesh of the animals newly killed for food! This exhibition may have had its symbolic value, or, on the other hand, it may have been designed merely as a promise of the feast to come. In either case the idea was sufficiently crude.

The visit of a bishop to one of the Jesuit towns gave an opportunity, which was eagerly seized, for the display of considerable pomp. Father Charlevoix gives an interesting account of the ceremonies that were considered to fit the event:—

“On the prelate’s approach to a Reduction, the news of which is always received by the inhabitants with the greatest demonstration of joy, two companies of cavalry immediately set out to meet him, and never



A COLONIST'S HOME, APOSTOLES.

stop till they have got within sight of the convoy. Then they form; display their colours, and perform in the best order all their evolutions. This done, they all alight; come and throw themselves at the prelate's feet; kiss his hand in the most respectful manner, and receive his blessing. About a league from the town, the *cacique*, the *corregidor*, and all the officers, both civil and military, the superior of the missions, the parish priest, and some other Jesuits assembled from the neighbouring Reductions likewise pay their respects to the bishop; fall on their knees to kiss his hand, and ask his blessing. The infantry appears next, drawn up in order of battle, colours flying, drums beating, fifes and clarions sounding, and, after opening to let his lordship pass through them, join again and bring up the rear, all the while beating to arms, till they have seen their prelate safely arrived.

“Strangers are surprised to find more order, good taste, and even elegance than are, perhaps, to be seen in some of the largest and best governed towns of Europe. Acclamations precede and follow the prelate wherever he goes, and his progress may be traced by flowers and odoriferous herbs and triumphal arches loaded with fruits and flowers of every kind. . . . The governor of the Province, the commissaries and visitors sent by the Kings of Spain to inspect the state of the Reductions are received in a more military

manner; but with the same zeal, and always with marks of the profoundest submission."

In this latter instance the statement concerning zeal is undoubtedly more polite than accurate; for the Jesuits, although in duty bound to receive the Royal officials, resented in their hearts the advent of even these privileged secular personages. This policy, as a matter of fact, was perfectly consistent with their situation. Had they suffered continued official interference—it was frequently their lot to be troubled by spasmodic attempts of the kind—their government must inevitably have come to an end. In view of the jealousies and natural curiosity directed against their settlements by those without the frontiers every visitor constituted in himself a potential danger, since it lay in his power to spread garbled reports which were certain to be drunk in thirstily by the enemies of the Order. It was essential for the Jesuits to reign as undisputed masters in their own territories, and in order to bring about the seclusion without which this would have been impossible they hedged about their country with a rampart which, though invisible, was as effective in times of peace as the Great Wall of China.

It was rarely indeed, therefore, that a disinterested spectator attended these great religious processions, and still more rarely that such a one was privileged to watch the more private life of the Guaranís. But

one is told that the churches were seldom empty, and that the Indians daily employed much of their spare time in prayer. To this, indeed, they had been trained from their infancy, for as much care was devoted to the young as to the adults. Thus at daybreak the children of both sexes were wont to assemble at the ringing of a bell, and after morning prayer they would sing the Christian teachings until sunrise. In the evening they returned to church to be catechised, and, moreover, went to their task with the enthusiasm which seems to have characterised the Guaraní appreciation of the Jesuit teaching.

CHAPTER XVI

THE JESUITS AND PAULISTAS

The enemies of the missionaries—A Jesuit account of the inhabitants of San Paulo—"A perverse generation"—Causes of hostility—Some opinions concerning rights and wrongs—The case for the missionaries—A ravaged land—The spoil of the Mamelucos—First attacks on the settlements—A reign of blood and terror—Methods employed—The Jesuits attempt to bargain for their converts' freedom—The sequel to a raid—Imperturbable Mamelucos—The opportunity of the priest—A condemnation from the pulpit, and its result—The raiders meet with increasing difficulties—Stratagem of the Paulistas—The consequences disastrous to the Jesuit cause—The Indians turn on the missionaries—The experience of Father Salazar—The result of Guaraní doubt—Periodical flights of priests and converts—Beginning of an organised resistance on the part of the mission Indians—Success of the native arms—A battle in doubt—An unexpected reinforcement—Surrender of the Mameluke force—Translation of a number of missions—Petition of the Jesuits—The King of Spain sanctions the use of firearms by the Indians—The Guaraní army described—Early successes of the troops—A notable battle—Encounter between the opposing flotillas—The combat on the river Yuquerí—The Mamelucos take to the shore, where they are finally defeated—Disparity of the forces—Later efficiency of the army.

THE most determined enemies of the Jesuits were the inhabitants of the town of San Paulo in Brazil. On the first arrival of the missionaries in the country this place had been brought under Jesuit influence. According to a Jesuit author, the dwellers in San Paulo continued for a while in religious sentiments. But—

“The success was of short continuance, and the Portuguese colony of San Paulo de Piratiningue, upon which the missionaries had founded their greatest hopes for extending the kingdom of Jesus Christ, soon became an invincible barrier in the way of their spiritual conquests. The evil proceeded from another colony contiguous to that of San Paulo, in which the blood of the Portuguese had been greatly mixed with that of the Brazilians ; for the contagion of this bad example soon reaching San Paulo, there sprang from this mixture a perverse generation, who carried their disorders of every kind to such an excess that in process of time they came to be called *Mamelus* on account of their great resemblance to those slaves of the ancient sultans of Egypt.”

Concerning the reasons why the Paulistas cast out the missionaries and became strongly inimical to the cause of the Order, a completely unbiased account is not to be expected at the hands of the Jesuits. Lay writers are wont to assign, probably with some reason, a modicum of blame to either side. Much of the Jesuits' unpopularity undoubtedly dated from the time when they first arrived at the place. Then, with unnecessary and ill-advised fervour, they persuaded the governor to raze the secular town to the ground in order that they might replace it with one built on their own model.

A little later, when the active labours of the

Fathers were in full operation, the settlers in Brazil chafed beneath the inconvenience that arose from the fact that the valuable Indian workfolk of their neighbourhoods had been swept up in the net of the missionaries, and had been taken away to populate the Jesuit settlements.

The plain fact, according to some rather unsympathetic critics, was that both Jesuits and Mamelus—or Mamelucos, or *anglice* Mamelukes, as they were variously termed—were in urgent need of native labour. In the contest that ensued, a double advantage rested with the Jesuits. They had been first in the field, and their humane methods naturally commended themselves far more to the natives than the callous procedure of the purely commercial arbiters of Indian life. Thus the material prosperity of the Paulistas was undoubtedly threatened, and these folk, bold and hardy to a degree, were determined to suffer this disadvantage not a moment longer than was possible. They became ardent slave-raiders, and for awhile carried sword and fire unchecked through the Jesuit regions.

“This dissolution,” proceeds the Jesuit author, “became so general, in spite of all the endeavours of the governors, magistrates, and Jesuits, seconded by the ecclesiastical superiors, to put a stop to it, that the Mamelus at length shook off the yoke of all divine and human authority. Upon this a great

number of banditti of all nations, Portuguese, Spaniards, Dutch, and Italians, who were obliged to fly the justice of men, and despised that of God, and a great many of the natives, settled amongst them; and, having soon contracted a taste for violence and rapine, gave themselves up to it without restraint, and filled with horror a great extent of country. The shortest way of putting a stop to so great an evil was to purge the earth of these miscreants. It was equally the interest of the two crowns of Spain and Portugal, now united under one head, to attempt it. But the town of St. Paul, situated on the top of a rock, the avenues to which may be easily defended by a few resolute fellows, could only be reduced by famine, and a much more numerous army would have been requisite for this purpose than either Brazil or Paraguay could raise and support. Besides, there never existed between the two nations harmony enough to make such an enterprise succeed."

It will be evident from the tenor of this description that the Jesuits entertained a love for the people of San Paulo no higher than the regard with which they themselves were considered by the desperate dwellers of the town on the rock. The Jesuits would appear to have possessed sufficient cause for bitterness, since, between the periods of 1628 and 1630 alone, they allege that the inhabitants

of San Paulo carried off no less than sixty thousand Indians from the Reductions, and bore them back with them to slavery.

These figures are no doubt exaggerated; but the fact remains that the amount of human cargo with which the Mamelucos succeeded in freighting themselves was sufficiently great. The extent of country harried and wasted was of course in proportion.

It would be wearisome to go into the entire history of the hostilities that raged between the Jesuits and the Mamelukes—a subject, indeed, which would require a volume to itself. A few incidents will suffice to show the nature of the warfare between the two.

The first attacks of the Brazilians followed almost immediately on the regular establishment of the Jesuit missions in that part of the world where the present frontiers of Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Brazil come nearest together. In the first instance the affair was a simple enough one for the raiders. They had merely to advance with caution through the forests, surprise the budding Reduction, and, having captured and bound those of its inhabitants who did not succeed in making their escape, bear them back to slavery in Brazil.

The scenes that ensued were undoubtedly pitiful in the extreme. The Jesuits, beseeching and im-



A DROVE OF HORSES, MISIONES.



TRAVEL IN THE CHACO.

ploring, would accompany the melancholy procession of their captive converts. Since sentiment entered not in the least into the composition of the average Mameluke — whose hatred of the Jesuits, indeed, was founded solely on pecuniary and practical considerations — it was seldom that their prayers for the liberty of their converts met with the least response, although the persons of the priests themselves were usually respected and spared. Nevertheless, on one or two occasions the end of a raid saw the body of a murdered priest lying in the midst of the ransacked houses of the Reduction.

Occasionally bargaining was resorted to over these human chattels. Thus when the settlement of Santa Teresa was surprised, and all its inhabitants captured, the missionaries on the spot strove in vain to pay the price demanded for the return of their booty by the raiders. As the Mamelucos had miserly ideas concerning discount, the negotiations came to an end owing to a want of resources on the part of the Fathers.

This particular event, we are told, happened a few days before Christmas. The raiders must have been possessed of consummate coolness; for, having ransacked the place, they determined to wrest a spiritual use from it as well. So on Christmas Day the band tramped into the church, each man bearing a lighted candle in his hand, and prepared themselves

sedately to hear Mass. Their advent doubtless caused much amazement to the officiating Father; but he had no option but to proceed with the service.

The moment the ceremony was at an end, however, the priest hastened to avail himself of the opportunity thus offered him. Before the warlike visitors had an opportunity of leaving the building he had bestirred himself to ascend the pulpit, and from that point of vantage he denounced them fiercely, and endeavoured to point out the depth of their sin. If he had expected the Mamelukes to quail before him the priest must have been bitterly disappointed; for, in the face of his eloquence, "they could not have listened to him with more calmness if what he said did not in any way concern them." Still, the heated words must have melted some corner of the intruders' mental armour, for, when the Father had ended, they marked their appreciation of his effort by granting him the liberty of two children who were wont to serve at the altar. No overwhelming testimonial this; but it was probably accepted in the spirit of acknowledgment that it was better than nothing at all.

It was only natural that after a while the task of the Mamelukes should have become more difficult. Although in the early days of the missions the Indians knew nothing of the military force and equipment that characterised them later, it was not long before

they learned to be on their guard and to defend themselves. In this latter respect their early efforts invariably proved disastrous ; their safety then lay mainly in caution and flight.

Recognising the failure of efforts on their original lines, the Mamelucos had recourse to a stratagem of the kind that was likely to be most fatal to the prospects of the Jesuits. They took to entering the country in the habits of the Jesuits themselves. Wolves in sheep's clothing, they acted the part with a conscientiousness worthy of a better cause. It was much in their favour, of course, that they were intimately acquainted with the Guaraní language. Thus they erected crosses, made presents to the Indians, distributed remedies among the sick, and exhorted the natives to embrace the Christian religion with a fervour that rivalled that of the priests themselves.

By such means the raiders would succeed in assembling a profitable collection of Indians, after which they would reveal themselves in their true colours, and make certain of their haul, cutting the throats of those who endeavoured to regain their freedom, and making off in exultant haste with the rest.

No procedure could have been more disastrous to the Jesuits than this. For the most profound confusion reigned in the dull native minds concerning

the genuine and the spurious priests. The natural consequence was a distrust, which frequently turned to an active animosity. After his Reduction had been marauded in a fashion such as this, Father Salazar, for one, underwent a disagreeable experience of this lack of comprehension on the part of his converts :—

“The Indians thought proper to make him responsible for it, and some of the most furious fell upon him while he was saying Mass ; threatened to kill him in case he did not oblige the Mamelus to give up their prey ; stripped him of his sacerdotal robes ; tore his gown off his back ; plundered his house, and even attempted to wrest out of his hands the sacred vessels. So that he at last found himself under the necessity of retiring through the woods, accompanied by two children only, in order to join the other missionaries who, like himself, had been despoiled of their flocks ; and many of whom had been left without a single neophyte.”

This experience was by no means unique. For a while it became the Indians' maxim, when in doubt, to turn upon the missionary. It had the merit that he was always at hand. And the Guaranís were frequently in doubt. The period, indeed, was one of continual alarms. From time to time the dreaded news would reach one of the settlements that the Mamelukes were approaching, intent on their merci-

less aim. Then would ensue fluster and terror at the Reduction, and in all haste the Guaranís, headed by their priests, would set out to forcé their way through the thorny refuges of the forest, to wander for days until they found shelter at another establishment, where they would remain until the danger was past. But frequently enough the first news of what was to befall was brought in grim fashion by the persons of the slave-raiders themselves. Then would ensue a tragedy at the ill-fated settlement.

In the early days of the Reductions these enforced flights, with all their peril and discomfort, contained few elements of actual loss. Later, when each Guaraní possessed his house, and the cultivated fields and grazing cattle surrounded the towns, the situation became different. The knowledge that the forsaken property of the community must fall into the hands of the Brazilians lent an added bitterness to their plight that went far to nerve a naturally unwarlike race to action.

Although as yet poorly armed, the Guaranís, encouraged by the missionaries, began to offer an organised resistance to the invaders. By 1638 the strength of this had already become considerable. In that year the Brazilians swept through that part of the country which is now Northern Uruguay, and harried the mission stations established there. But, although they had matters their own way for a while,

they found in the end that the nut they had seized was hard shell, lacking in kernel.

On their retreat the mission Indians took the initiative, and pursued them with a strong force. When the enemy was overtaken a number of skirmishes ensued, which left neither side with any appreciable advantage. But the missionaries in the meanwhile had not been idle. Seeing that the enemy had been brought to bay, they had scoured the country, and had collected reinforcements in all haste. Thus, when a fresh force of fifteen hundred mission Indians arrived upon the scene, the Mamelukes, realising the desperate nature of their position, entrenched themselves, and prepared to offer a final resistance.

The newly found courage of the Indians was not sufficient to urge them against these ramparts, behind which waited their resolute enemies. They wavered, and were almost lost, for the Brazilians, taking prompt advantage of their hesitation, came out in a daring and impetuous charge that was more than the Guaranís could withstand. They were on the point of breaking in confusion when the unexpected appearance of a further reinforcement put a different complexion on the scene.

The newcomers were Spaniards, who had been sent by the Governor of the River Plate to ascertain the state of affairs in the neighbourhood. It was

therefore by the merest chance that they happened to light at that moment on the spot where the battle was raging. Their force was far from formidable : it numbered no more than eleven men. But for the purposes of that particular contest these sufficed. Encouraged by the sight of the Spaniards, the Indians resumed the attack, and the Mamelukes were forced to surrender.

The fate that attended the prisoners appears to have been remarkably mild. They were excommunicated, it is true ; but this weapon of the Church had been used so frequently against them that it had lost its sting. After this they were allowed to go free. The invasion, however, had the result of causing the Jesuits to move the Reductions in that neighbourhood to the country which lay between the rivers Uruguay and Paraná (now a portion of Argentina). But this translation they only accomplished with difficulty, as the Indian had already developed a certain love for home.

Seeing the disadvantages with which the possession of their crude weapons, such as bows, arrows, stone axes, and slings, endowed the Indians in their struggle against the formidably armed Portuguese aggressors, the Jesuits had long petitioned the King of Spain to sanction the use of firearms by their native converts. Father de Montoya, in representing the case to the Council of the Indies, urged that the

very existence of the mission towns could no longer continue were their inhabitants to remain without these necessary implements of war. He promised, moreover, that the cost of the arms and ammunition should not lie at the charge of the royal Treasury, since they would be purchased by the missions themselves. With a touch of that independence and sense of organisation that was characteristic of the Jesuit of the period, he added that it was not even necessary to beg the loan of military instructors, since some lay brothers of the Order who had served in the army could be introduced from Chile.

This plan met with great opposition on the part of those who complained that the Jesuits already possessed too much power. In the end, however, the King of Spain gave his consent, and from that time dated the establishment of the regular forces of the missions. Of the condition of this army in its maturity Father Charlevoix has words of considerable admiration :—

“There has arisen among the neophytes a militia which for more than an age past has been the greatest resource of their Sovereign in this part of South America against both sovereign and domestic enemies, and which, notwithstanding, it does not cost him a single farthing to pay or to maintain, as we shall soon have an opportunity to demonstrate. But what is still more surprising in these Indian troops,



OLD JESUIT BATH, APOSTOLES.

the glory they have acquired by their victories, so far from puffing up their hearts and giving them an air of liberty and independence, as might be naturally apprehended, has put a stop to those mutinies which their reiterated misfortunes had used before to occasion, so that their pastors have never found them more submissive and docile."

This account, although a trifle coloured by enthusiasm, is accurate enough in the main, and the services rendered by the Indian troops to the King of Spain in regular warfare are a matter of history. But these words relate to an age later than that to which we have been referring. The earlier successes of the Jesuit army—although it was much for the Guaranís to have succeeded at all—cannot lay claim, in the circumstances in which they occurred, to any special military glory. By this I mean to imply that the advantage of numbers lay very greatly with the Jesuit Indians.

One of the engagements which was most instrumental in turning the scale in favour of the Jesuit cause occurred in 1641. In that year the inhabitants of the missions between the rivers Paraná and Uruguay received news that the Mamelukes were making preparations to attack them. The converts made their own preparations in turn, and mobilised a body of four thousand men with three hundred officers at their head. Since firearms were still

scarce, it was only these latter that were armed with guns, the rank and file still retaining the slings and bows and arrows of their forefathers.

The news soon came through that the enemy was approaching by water. Four hundred Mamelukes, accompanied by almost the same number of Tupi Indians, were advancing along the river Acaray in a great flotilla of canoes. This so-called river Acaray is almost certain to have been the river Yuquerí, a tributary of the Uruguay, a charming and idyllic stream with wooded banks unusually lofty for that part of the world.

The Jesuit forces marched down to this river, and, embarking in their own fleet, awaited the approach of the enemy. It might have been thought that, when the invaders came in sight of this vastly superior army, the numbers of the latter would have caused them to retreat. But "they despised the neophytes so much that, as soon as they received intelligence of their approach, they tugged harder than ever at their oars to join them."

Then began a naval battle on the narrow stream. The mission Indians began the fight in grim earnest by the discharge of a cannon, which sunk three of the Mamelukes' canoes. Simultaneously rose up from the banks the voices of the missionaries, and the old men, women, and children, imploring the aid of the God of battles and of the apostle of the Indies.

Not in vain, says the chronicler. The raiders, finding the tables turned on them, forsook the water, and prepared to make a stand on shore. Here they were fiercely attacked by the Guaranís, and the engagement continued intermittently well into the next day, when the battered remnants of the Mamelukes fled for good from the scene. The Jesuits extolled this victory highly, yet, considering the disparity in numbers, it is a little strange that any of the slave-hunters should have escaped at all.

Nevertheless, it is scarcely fair to compare these Indians, at this early stage of their existence as a defined community, with the seasoned warriors of warlike tribes. Even such a feat as this would have been far beyond their powers a few decades before, and, having once arrived at the pitch of victories, their steadiness increased continuously. It is not the least thing that can be said to the credit of the Jesuits that they manufactured soldiers as well as saints—even if merely comparative in degree—out of the most unpromising material.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REDUCTIONS

Some features of the Jesuit Republic—A socialistic community—Foundations of the State—Original customs of the Guaranís—The introduction and manipulation of property—Agricultural laws—Divisions of land—*Tabambaé*, *Abambaé*, *Tupambaé*—The distribution of labour—Hours of work in the Reductions—Idleness as a crime—The Jesuits as matrimonial agents—Compulsory matings on a wholesale scale—Speculation concerning the aftermath of the unions—The system of rewards—Promotion and uniforms—Causes of industrial success—Punishments—Drastic measures of correction—The Guaranís' indifference to physical pain—Confinements and penances—Charitable institutions—Hospitals—Asylums for the old and infirm—Primary and secondary schools—The choice of a career—The variety of workshops—Advantages of the specialist—Some considerations of equality—A treatment according to needs rather than work—Justification in the circumstances—Some condemnations of the Jesuit procedure—Zeal as a meddlesome factor—The Guaraní protected against himself—Natural helplessness of the race—Some examples—A comparison with the penguin—The life of the settlements according to one of the missionaries—An idyllic state—The Indian as manufactured by the Jesuit—Some contemporary opinions.

THAT which might be called the Constitution of the Jesuit Republic should be of especial interest to recall at the present moment, when the atmosphere is so heavily laden with experimental socialism. There are many definitions of pure socialism, and ideas vary not a little concerning even communism. But from

a popular point of view the Jesuit government was probably the most socialistic of the important institutions of the kind that the world has ever known.

Its worst enemies were unable to deny the excellence of the practical results that ensued. But whether this success can legitimately be employed as a pointer in the consideration of modern affairs is very doubtful. As I have endeavoured to make clear, the circumstances were exceptional. The Jesuits did not transform one species of government into another. They erected their imposing structure on the crude foundation that was natural to the Guaraní, a foundation that was already strongly tinged with practical socialism.

The Guaranís had never known money or private property in the accepted sense of the word. Therefore it was a comparatively easy matter to elaborate for them comprehensive rules of society without the introduction of either. From a severely industrial point of view the main alterations effected by the missionaries were confined to a systematic storing and division of property of a kind which had never been accumulated during the primitive existence of the Indians. I am now, of course, referring to the industrial efforts alone of the missionaries, but these in themselves are sufficiently important, since it was upon them that the entire secular constitution of the missions hinged.

In a country where agriculture was the principal resource the agricultural laws are naturally the first to be considered. Although it is popularly held that private property was unknown in the missions, it must not be imagined that no subdivisions and allotments of territory existed. Like all else in the Republic, the soil was methodically parcelled out.

The lands of each settlement were divided into three sections. Each of these was known by a Guaraní name. The first, *Tabambaé*, belonged to the community; the second, *Abambaé*, was reserved for the heads of families; while the third, *Tupambaé*, was termed the property of God.

In the first of these sections all the Indians worked for three days in each week, and the resultant harvests were stored in the public granaries. The second approached most nearly to the status of private property, in that portions were allotted to the fathers of families who, with their children, were permitted to labour in them for the remaining days. According to some authorities this system was not spontaneously instituted by the Jesuits. It was only accepted with reluctance out of deference to the pressure put on the point by the Court of Spain. Both friends and enemies of the Jesuits seem to have agreed that the work carried out in these sections was the least efficient of the three.

In the *Tupambaé* worked the boys and those grown Indians who enjoyed the least reputation for industry. The harvests derived from these were also stored in the public granary, and were destined for the support of the widows, orphans, sick, aged, as well as for the native officials, artists, and craftsmen whose duties prevented them from taking an active share in the field work.

Having dealt with the produce, it is time to consider the workers. The labour in the fields began at dawn, and was continued almost throughout the day, with a pause for rest that endured from midday until two o'clock. Labour was obligatory in the Jesuit colonies, and this rule was strictly enforced among those in sound health. A failure to work, indeed, was followed by the inevitable punishment of the culprit.

As has already been explained, the missionaries exercised a strict supervision over the morals of their converts. In such respects they exercised an authority that was superpaternal, and proved themselves rather too relentless arbiters of youthful affections. By their laws the male Indians were obliged to marry at the age of seventeen, and the females at that of fifteen. At those ages the members of either sex were marshalled before the Fathers, and those who had not chosen mates were provided by the missionaries with these necessary complements on the spot.

The Jesuits appear to have taken this responsibility on themselves as a matter of course.

From a romantic and sentimental point of view the result of such chance flingings together must frequently have been lamentable. Certainly in Europe the lives of these official matchmakers would scarcely have been worth the living after their wholesale efforts had been put to the test. But it must be remembered that romance and sentiment coloured the Guaraní temperament to an altogether insignificant degree, and the converts were probably content enough on the whole to find their partners chosen for them in this accommodating way.

Many advanced thinkers of the present day would doubtless characterise this procedure of the Jesuits as rational and to be recommended. Possibly it was. In any case, in view of the future similar experiments that are so strongly advocated by some, it would have been interesting to ascertain the qualities which guided the matrimonial agents in their choice. But whether they judged by physical or temperamental points, or by a judicious blend of both, I have no means of knowing. Nothing but a divorce court would have produced satisfactory evidence on the question, and this instructive institution had no existence in the mission country.

It has been said that the Indian converts were wont to labour without any other incentive but that

afforded by their religion. This is true in a great degree, since monetary remuneration was never permitted to enter into their calculations. Nevertheless, the work of the Reductions was not carried on without a system of rewards. These materialised in promotion to the higher ranks of the crafts and offices, and in the wearing of special and more elaborate garments, which distinguished them from the rank and file of the labourers.

It is an undeniable fact that a great incentive to work lay in the belief that toil well achieved was productive of a special blessing on the labourer from the God of the missions—by no means a mischievous belief in itself, but one that has fallen strangely behind the times. The praise of the missionaries, moreover, was a treasured thing to be well striven for. But these special garments, dealt out to the distinguished, carried no small weight, and were eagerly sought after for their own sake. It is in these three species of rewards that we may look for the success of Guaraní labour.

Once admitted to a Reduction, no option concerning work was permitted to the Indians. Beggary was not tolerated, and peculiarly lazy Indians were set to cultivate the reserve lands as a punishment. Thus every one in the missions was kept occupied.

Even in that land which Mr. Cunninghame Graham has termed a Lost Arcadia it was necessary

for the sting of punishment to enter. The judges of crime were the Jesuits, and it has been alleged against them by some of their critics that their methods of reproof were unduly drastic. It is said, for instance, that both men and women were flogged until the blood ran in streams down their bare backs. The Jesuits, on the other hand, assert that these punishments were no severer than was needful to fit the crime and the Indian temperament.

This may, or may not, have been the case ; but it is certain that the susceptibilities of these Indians were not to be so lightly touched as those of the majority of other races. Even to-day the Guaraní nature is amazingly callous as regards pain. Instances are still continually to be met with of physical damage, incurred to a degree that would prostrate the average man, that has been borne by the dusky victim with a stoicism seldom witnessed outside the ranks of the lower animals. It may be taken for granted that an ordinary flogging would not seriously have inconvenienced a true Guaraní. In order to make a lasting impression it was necessary for the lashes to be keen. I do not doubt that the performance was brutal. The excuse of the Jesuits may well have been that no other would have sufficed.

Physical chastisement, however, was by no means the only form of punishment applied in the Reductions. Solitary confinement was frequently resorted

to, as well as penances and deprivations of every description. The missionaries themselves assert that the occasions which called for punishment of any kind whatever were delightfully rare. In this their point of view could not well fail to have been biased, and the truth probably lies midway between their statements and those of their adversaries. We may certainly take it for granted that, in the hands of the Jesuits, the Indians gave fewer occasions for correction than would have been the case under any other contemporary teachers. The Jesuits asserted that the faults of their converts were merely the faults of children, to be cured in a similar manner.

The institutions of charity were a notable feature of the Jesuit settlements. Each was provided with a hospital staffed by trained Indian nurses that was as efficient in its way as any other of the time. There were asylums, moreover, for the old and infirm. Even here the Jesuit dislike of wasted hours held good, and each inmate was obliged to perform such light tasks as his health and years permitted.

Each Reduction, it should be mentioned, obtained the benefit of a lower and a higher grade school. In the first were taught the children, whose forefathers' numerical knowledge had been limited to the counting of their fingers and toes, and these attained to a moderate proficiency in arithmetic as well as in the other two R's.

The second school was designed for the more intelligent, and in this, amongst other things, the pupils were instructed in the reading and writing of Latin. This, however, since it was effected parrot-wise, seems to have been a somewhat shallow procedure, purposeless except for Church rites, since the patient scholars remained ignorant throughout of the actual significance of the language. To the ordinary Indian, as has been explained, a knowledge of Spanish was absolutely forbidden. As soon as the children were old enough to leave school each was made to apply himself to the career for which he seemed best fitted. Those who gave promise of no particular aptitude in any special direction became agriculturists, and were sent out to labour in the fields. Those who bade fair to become expert craftsmen were apprenticed to a suitable trade.

The range of these was sufficiently wide to give scope to an ingenuity considerably greater than that of the Guaraní, notable enough though this proved itself. According to a contemporary Jesuit writer: "There are everywhere workshops for gilding, painters, and sculptors; gold, silver, and other smiths; clockmakers, carpenters, joiners, weavers, and founders—in a word, for all the arts and trades that can be useful to them." In their dealings with the Indians the missionaries realised the value of the specialist, and it was undoubtedly due to this fact

and to the early training accorded to their converts that such meritorious results were obtained.

After this rough sketch of the main industrial and legislative features of these establishments, we may turn to a more general survey of the Jesuit rule and its results. Here, of course, the greatest amount of dissension arises on the part of the various critics. Señor Blos Garay has some instructive words on the point. Commenting adversely on the system, he says :—

“One of the cardinal points of the Jesuit régime lay in the equality that the Fathers maintained among the Guaranís, an equality sufficiently absolute to destroy all sense of initiative and emulation, and all incentive to exercise their mental activity. The virtuous and evil, the laborious and idle, the active and slothful, the intelligent and the foolish—all these were treated and clothed according to their *needs* and not according to their *work*.”

The italics in the last sentence are mine, since it occurs to me that the words thus emphasised lend a remarkable significance to the last sentence. As an indictment of the mission methods it appears to fail utterly. In the first place, it must be a novel species of morality that condemns the treatment of folk according to their needs. Further, granted even that this procedure be reprehensible, its existence deprives of all its force the argument

that the Fathers employed the Indians for the purposes of commercial gain rather than for the benefit of their spiritual welfare. Judged from a commercial standpoint, it is true enough that no system could have proved less profitable to ordinary labour masters. But the circumstances were no ordinary ones, and the results speak for themselves. As to a land whose inhabitants are treated according to their needs and not according to their toil, there are very few folk who would shrink from crossing its frontiers—very few writers, certainly, and least of all the author of this present work !

The charges of Richard Burton are based on less abstract factors. His main contentions are concerned with the self-interest with which he charges the missionaries. After several general statements of the kind, which, it must be admitted, are based merely on hearsay, he proceeds :—

“The crops of yerba and tobacco, dry pulse, and cotton . . . were stored with hides, timber, and coarse hand-woven stuffs in public garners under the direction of the padres. After feeding and clothing his lieges, King Jesuit exported the remains of the common stock in his own boats, and exchanged it at Buenos Aires for the general wants—hardware, drugs, looms, agricultural implements, fine clothes to be given as prizes, and splendid stuffs and ornaments for the church. No Guaraní could buy

or sell ; he was, however, graciously permitted to change one kind of food for another."

When summarised, there does not appear to be much weight in these charges against "the meddling and greedy Jesuits," as Burton terms them. They constitute a recital of facts that are freely acknowledged and recorded by the Jesuit historians themselves. A suggestion, on the other hand, of real importance is the one made to the effect that the Jesuits designedly paralysed the individual intelligence of their converts, and held in check their natural aptitude for self-government.

Now it is by no means improbable that the Jesuits were meddlesome in their inclinations. The mark of genuine zeal is an uncontrollable interference in the affairs of others. But there is no proof that this enthusiastic quality was directed towards the end suggested here. On the other hand, there is evidence in plenty that the Guaraní in his natural and shiftless condition had always been notably lacking in the gifts of government and organisation ; as, indeed, he remains to this day.

The extent to which this failing was carried was evident even in warfare. Thus the Guaranís, ere their ranks became disciplined, possessed only the vaguest notions of self-preservation when not actually engaged in the heat of the fight itself. Should they have won a victory, for instance, their

cohesion would die away the moment that the strain of the combat relaxed. Each pride-swollen warrior would then stroll upon his homeward way independently of the rest. This trait was well known to the native enemies of the race, and on such occasions these would frequently gather together again, and, assailing the scattered units of the irresponsible heroes, would easily convert a defeat into a victory. The Guaraní of the early period had much in common with the penguin. One could knock his brother down with a club, and yet leave him unconcerned as to the ultimate danger of such a procedure to his own person.

So much for the original intelligence of the Guaraní. This crudeness of intellect, however, did not apparently stand in the light of their becoming good citizens. It may possibly have aided not a little in that direction. Here is a somewhat idyllic picture of the life of the settlements, given by one of the Fathers :—

“There are no quarrels or lawsuits to be seen here; *mine* and *yours* are unknown words; because it is, in fact, to have no exclusive property, to be always ready to divide the little one has with those that want it, and to have one’s attention as much, and sometimes even more, taken up with the concerns of others than one’s own. It is thus the authors of this establishment have made the very failings of



A TOBA MAN AMONG THE BANANAS.

these Indians contribute to procure them the very greatest blessings of society, and the constant practice of the first of all Christian virtues, which is charity."

Here we have the other side of the picture, a roseate sketch that contrasts strangely with the gloomy denunciations of their adversaries. Granting even a little extra colouring to their illustrations, we must do the Jesuits the justice of acknowledging that, after all, being on the spot, they *knew* the circumstances, while the opinion of those without their frontiers was founded chiefly on hearsay and surmise.

Undoubtedly the same writer does not exaggerate when, referring to the rare visit of a stranger, he says: "What surprises him most . . . is the prodigious attention observable in these new Christians, of which he is enabled to form a competent judgment by comparing them with the wild Indians he has occasion to meet, and even with the converted Indians in the service of the Spaniards."

This, after all, seems to me to be the crux of the entire matter. The proof of the mission work lay in the Indian—as manufactured by the Jesuit. For the vindication of the missionaries it is sufficient that his quality should by very much have exceeded the rest.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE JESUIT INDUSTRIES AND ARTS

Commercial independence of the Reductions—The cultivation of sugar, mandioca, and tobacco—Cotton—*Yerba maté*—An accommodating crop—Alleged hardships endured by the Indian collectors—Improbability of the reports—Timber and building stone—The Jesuits as cattle-breeders—Occupations of the women—Commerce with the outer world—System of barter employed—The commercial fleet of the missions—Trusted native agents—Lack of inventive power in the natives—The compensating faculty of imitation—Guaraní artists and sculptors—Excellence of their work—Their merits as builders—Beauty of the Jesuit churches—The discovery of an unexpected talent—Native love of music—Astonishing variety of manufactures—The Spanish authorities and the mission gunpowder—The Jesuits and gold-mines—The reports of hidden wealth—Lack of foundation for the tales in the River Plate Provinces—Richard Burton's views—Popular legends—Fiction and fact—Absence of gold in the Paraguayan mission fields—The disappearance of Mr. Davies—Lost explorers.

THE secular institutions of the Jesuit towns were comprehensive to a degree that it is difficult to understand when the natural temperaments of the native workers are taken into consideration. It was only natural that each centre should have been self-supporting, and that the farm produce of the neighbouring fields should have sufficed amply for the modest needs of the Indians who, as a matter of fact, until the arrival of the missionaries had been

content from force of circumstances with a more meagre and less varied fare.

Indeed, had the success of the Reductions rested on the mere provision of fundamental necessities, there would have been little remarkable or meritorious in the achievement. It is only when the list of crafts, and even of arts, is considered, that the true significance of these feats in the process of civilisation can be judged.

Ere arriving at this point, however, it would be as well to deal with the more ordinary industries, those, indeed, from which the Indians primarily supported their existence. Sugar, mandioca, and tobacco were grown in abundance, although in many respects cotton was the most important and remunerative crop of all.

I have purposely left out from this category the *yerba maté*, the famous Paraguayan tea, as this, although most invaluable as a crop, grew wild, and, like the great quantities of wax and honey, was to be had for the collecting. In the Jesuit country grew the best quality of this *yerba maté*, that was even then so popular throughout the greater part of the southern continent.

It has been alleged against the missionaries that in their greed for wealth they forced the Indians who went out into the forests for the gathering of this commodity to bear loads beyond their strength, and to

penetrate into neighbourhoods that offered extreme hardship and danger from such evils as snake-bite and the like. It seems to me that neither accusation can have been well grounded. Granted that it was possible for the Jesuits to employ arbitrary power now and again, any organised oppression of the kind—even had it not been clearly opposed to their tenets—could never have been inflicted by a few score of priests on the tens of thousands of Indians in the midst of whom they dwelt. It is perfectly obvious that any genuine and general discontent on the part of the natives would have resulted in the abrupt shattering of the Jesuit rule. As to the dangers from snake-bites and from the various beasts of the forest, what else had the Guaranís in their everyday life faced from time immemorial? These charges, nevertheless, have been once more brought up against the missionaries within the last fifteen years by a cultured and able Paraguayan writer.

Besides these industries, the Guaranís were sent to cut timber in the forest, and to quarry building stone. Neither of these feats, it is true, required any profound degree of ingenuity, nevertheless they served to broaden the converts' sphere of utility.

When the mission country had once become fully settled, cattle-farms were established, and the breeding of stock proceeded apace. On one *estancia* alone there are said to have been no less than fifty thousand

head of cattle, and many others were very nearly as amply stocked.

The women, moreover, were not idle. A number of them were wont to labour in the fields, while others occupied their time in spinning. For this purpose a certain quantity of wool and cotton was doled out to them at the beginning of each week.

Such occupations as these were, of course, simple enough in themselves, and by no means beyond the capabilities of the most unsophisticated barbarian, as indeed was the Guaraní when first brought into contact with the missionaries. It was not long, however, before the difference in the temperament of the Indians became marked, and the extent of their possibilities and limitations grew clear.

Although the Jesuit settlements were to all practical interests and purposes self-supporting, there were naturally many objects and commodities which it suited their convenience far better to obtain from the centres outside their own boundaries. Thus we read that a certain number of the Reductions were in the first instance without iron, and the tools with which the Indians worked were fashioned of stone—instruments which, in fact, although more elaborate in design, much resembled the crude implements employed by the primitive forefathers of the converts.

Owing to these needs a certain commerce was developed with such centres as Buenos Aires, Santa

Fé, and other towns. But the obtaining of the necessary articles was effected without the introduction of money. The system of barter was maintained in their relations with the Spaniards.

When the time came for the shipment of the superfluous harvests and stores, a flotilla of barges and canoes was prepared for their reception on either of the great rivers Paraná or Uruguay. Then, heavily laden with *yerba maté*, cotton, wax, and honey, the commercial fleet of the missions would start on its way downstream.

It was only the most trusted Guaranís who were placed in charge of these craft, and who were allowed to go forth into the outer world, and mingle with the Spaniards. To none but those held to be proof against the contaminating effects of the rough-and-ready methods of the early colonisation—and those, moreover, whose probity was strengthened by a certain commercial acumen—was permitted the responsibility of these ventures in trade.

From a business point of view the results were satisfactory ; but of the effects on the Indians themselves of these excursions I have unfortunately no efficient data. One can only imagine the exhortations the Guaranís received ere their departure, and the anxiety on the part of the missionaries—who at no time placed an overflowing trust in their dusky disciples—until the fleet made its appearance again,

paddling slowly upstream, bearing the spoils from the outer world.

To return, however, to the more local occupations of the Indians. The faculty of invention, it was discovered, was notably lacking in these dusky folk. It became evident, on the other hand, that they possessed the power of imitation to an extraordinary degree. On this the Jesuits worked with a fervour that afforded really brilliant results.

In the course of time each town became possessed not only of its skilled craftsmen, but of a certain number of artists and sculptors as well. It is remarkable to think that the decorations, pictures, and sculpture in all the churches and in every place throughout the settlements were the work of the Indians alone. No object, apparently, was too elaborate in design for them to imitate with the utmost success. The most decorative candlestick, the costliest piece of furniture, or the finest morsels of carving—all these were faithfully reproduced by the ingenious converts.

Their claim to distinction as builders is sufficiently proved by the fact that all the churches themselves in the land of the missions were the work of their hands. They were no crude and makeshift buildings these. Blas Garay protests that they were the largest and most beautiful in South America, and that their ornaments rivalled those of Madrid and Toledo—a

bold statement that is not so very wide of the mark, as the crumbling ruins in the midst of the forests will testify to to-day.

After a while some unexpected talent was discovered to be latent in the Guaranís. Greatly to the joy of the missionaries, their converts gave evidence of a genuine love for music, and of an ear that was by nature accurate. These gifts were encouraged to the utmost by the Jesuits, and, as may be imagined, were made the most of on the occasions of the church festivals.

As the life of the settlements developed there was nothing whatever which, once having been shown the way, the Indians seemed unable to produce. Hats, clothes, uniforms, boats, tools, guns, cannon, and even gunpowder—these are only a very few examples of their manufactures. The making of this last article was viewed with much suspicion by the Spanish authorities, who on more than one occasion demanded guarantees on the point. The missionaries, fully aware of the hesitancy of the Council of the Indies, responded wisely to the effect that the gunpowder was employed for fireworks on festal occasions, as indeed it was. There were occasions, all the same, when the very existence of many of the missions depended on this festal powder being kept dry. Moreover, when the Spanish authorities needed the assistance of the Jesuit forces in the official wars,

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CHUNUPI WITH EAR-DISC.



CHUNUPI INDIAN, SHOWING
ENLARGED EAR-LOBE.



CHUNUPI WITH EAR-DISC.

they were the first to congratulate the settlements on the possession of such effective shooting material.

One of the allegations brought against the Jesuits which excited a special degree of popular animosity against the Order was that of being in secret possession of gold-mines from which they were supposed to extract boundless wealth. The imaginations of the Spanish colonists once excited on the subject, rumour ran riot. Half of the wealth of the Indies was held to be pouring into the widely opened mouths of the Jesuit treasure-sacks, which, once filled, never again yielded up their contents. The report undoubtedly imbued with an intense bitterness all those who desired to share in this rich booty, and could not.

Now, although something of the kind may have occurred in the gold-bearing regions elsewhere in the continent, where the Jesuits likewise possessed establishments, there is no doubt that these tales told of the River Plate Provinces were pure fables. Yet Richard Burton brings them to the front again in 1870 in his *Letters from the Battlefields of Paraguay*, and, indeed, professes himself surprised at the doubts cast on this subject. After explaining that the Jesuits kept the matter in the profoundest obscurity, he proceeds :—

“ A host of writers, the latest being M. Demessay, doubts their very existence, and makes the precious

metals an extract of agriculture. But their opinions are of little value in the presence of earlier authors ; for instance, of ' Mr. R. M.' (*A Relation of a Voyage to Buenos Aires, 1716*), who declares that the missionaries had gold-diggings, and of Mr. Davies (*Letters from Paraguay*), who, travelling in 1796-98, asserts that the Fathers of the Reductions had 80,000 to 100,000 disciplined troops to defend their mines. The latter author saw pure gold collected from the banks of the Uruguay, upon which, we may remember, were seven of the thirty missions. He imprudently travelled through the old missions in a semi-clerical disguise, and he suddenly disappeared without leaving a trace."

Now it might well be thought that a writer such as Burton would have accumulated some rather more serious evidence than this before hastening with such emphasis to the charge. Ere proceeding to facts that are now acknowledged, we may consider the evidence in question on its own merits. I must confess that I have lacked the opportunity of perusing either of the works in question. But the mere bold declaration of "Mr. R. M." may be swept aside at once as of no value whatever.

Mr. Davies, it is true, has some more explicit statements to make ; but why this gentleman should have been raked up from his comfortable obscurity to pose as an authority is a little difficult to under-

stand in view of the fact that his visit to the country occurred twenty years after the expulsion of the Jesuits. It is obvious that he had drunk in with avidity the aftermath of those rumours that were partly responsible for this very expulsion, and that, from obvious motives, were not permitted to die a sudden death when their falsity became known.

That Mr. Davies saw gold collected from the banks of the Uruguay is no doubt a perfectly true statement. Were he to visit the spot to-day he would have an opportunity of witnessing a similar process continued on more modern lines. Were he to travel to the north of Uruguay, moreover, he would find some gold-mines in existence there, mines in which important shafts have only recently been sunk. Previous to these recent developments the mines showed traces of the merest surface workings, which, whether effected by Jesuit Indians or not, could only have given results worthy of being guarded by a dozen Indian troops, to say nothing of a hundred thousand.

The plain fact is that—with the exception of this, at that time unimportant, source—the country devoted to the Jesuit missions with which we are dealing is not a gold-bearing one to any other than an utterly insignificant extent. The *conquistadores*, who had a keen scent for the yellow and white dross of ages, knew well enough where the fields for metals lay, and

these were well to the north and to the west of the mission settlements in Paraguay. I do not for a moment attempt to imply that the Jesuits would not have welcomed the presence of important goldfields in their province had they chanced to have been situated there. Since they were not, it is to be doubted if they ever regretted them. Nevertheless, like many other folk, they lacked the substance, but not the envy of others, which was a little hard.

Curiously enough, the disappearance of Mr. Davies, with all its gloomy suggestiveness, is only one out of dozens of precisely similar episodes that occur so frequently in the wilder parts of South America that the tale may be said to be characteristic of the land. To-day engineers in Peru and Bolivia will tell of daring spirits who, lured onwards by accounts of hidden gold, have penetrated into the country of the Indians and have never returned. The cases here are usually authentic enough, and there is no doubt that it is indeed gold that lies at the bottom of tragedies such as these. But the story fits in with Bolivia and Peru, not with the eastern Provinces of the River Plate.

This quest after gold, as usual, has led us away from more human considerations, and especially from the characteristics of the Guaranís, which must be continued in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PRINTING PRESSES OF THE JESUITS

Policy of the Jesuits—Its comparative liberality—A comparison with the Spanish views—Official discouragement of culture and knowledge—Grounds for the censorship—General restrictions on printing—Beginning of the industry in Peru—Royal hesitation before permission is granted—The delay in a similar enterprise in the River Plate Provinces—The first printed book in these territories the work of the Jesuit Indians—A home-made press—Previous work of the Guaranís—Some astonishing penmanship—Confusion owing to faithful imitation—Success of the native printing—Skilled craftsmen—The manufacture of machinery—Expert priests as instructors—The Guaranís prove themselves model apprentices—Masters of craft—Limitations of the Guaraní language—Questions affecting official permission to print—Circulation of the Jesuit books—An important reading public—Later publications—Surmises as to the number of presses in use—Expert opinions—After the expulsion of the Jesuits a doubt arises as to whether they actually owned presses—Definite proof of their existence—Ultimate neglect and destruction of the printing presses.

PERHAPS one of the most eloquent proofs of the degree to which the Jesuit civilisation attained is to be met with in the history of printing as carried on at the missions. It is, I believe, infinitely to the credit of the Jesuits that the policy they pursued—however jealous they may have proved themselves that it should be carried out under no other direction

than their own—tended to the broadening of the intellect and to the wider spread of knowledge.

The views of the Spanish Court and of the Council of the Indies concerning the South American colonists were diametrically opposed to these. One of the most legitimate grievances of the South Americans lay in the fact that the laws of Spain designedly withheld from them all opportunity of culture and general knowledge. The importation of books into the southern continent was discouraged, and the censorship exercised on such volumes as it was attempted to introduce was so rigid as to exclude all chance of real intellectual benefit. The motive of these measures, of course, lay in the theory that a state of blissful ignorance would obviate discontent on the part of the colonists, a surmise that, very much to her cost, Spain found to be fallacious in the end.

It may be imagined that the restrictions placed on printing in South America itself were at least as severe as those concerning the introduction of books from Europe. No publication whatever was permitted unless the royal licence had previously been obtained. And this, at the best, was grudgingly given, and frequently withheld. To such a degree, indeed, was the thing carried that it became a ridiculous mockery to the intelligence of the colonists. The full-grown men of the far south were doled out minute portions of infantile intellectual food, when

their natural instincts caused them to crave for wide and general knowledge such as that possessed by the Europeans of that day.

It was only natural that South American printing should first have occurred in Peru, the senior viceroyalty of the Spanish possessions of that continent. In 1583 the Jesuit Fathers in that country had prepared a catechism in the native languages which they were anxious to print. To this end it was necessary to address a petition to the King of Spain. In the meanwhile the owner of the printing press had forwarded a similar request to the Court, urging that the machine might be employed in accordance with the strict censorship common at the time. His Majesty does not appear to have been favourably impressed by the idea, since, before giving an answer, he addressed a communication to the Viceroy of Peru, asking for information on the subject, and demanding, in particular, reasons why the request should not be granted! In the end, after much hesitation and parley, permission was accorded, and in due course the catechism, the first work printed in South America, saw the light.

Owing to their remote situation and to the neglect which they were wont to suffer in comparison with the royal treatment accorded to Peru, it was more than a century later before a similar enterprise bore fruit in the Provinces of the River Plate. But,

when it occurred, the feat here was infinitely more notable in its way than that which had been accomplished in Peru. It was no Spanish town that witnessed the manufacture of the first book to be printed in the Provinces of the River Plate. The distinction lay with one of the small Indian towns of the Jesuit missions.

The work in question was written in the Guaraní language by one of the missionaries, Father José Serrano, and was a translation of *On the Difference between the Temporal and the Eternal*. Not having had the advantage of seeing the work, I am unable to describe it; but there are several circumstances in connection with its production which are sufficiently worthy of remark without the introduction of technicalities. Not only was the book printed by the Guaranís, but the press employed for the purpose was manufactured on the spot, and the very type itself was the handiwork of the Indians! Thus in crafts of the kind the converts of the Jesuits were actually in advance of the descendants of the *conquistadores* who had originally enslaved their race!

Ere going more fully, however, into the astonishing occurrence, it is necessary to go back some years in order to pick up the thread of events. Long ere the printing of this first work, the necessity for some mechanical contrivance had been acutely felt in the



MATACCO WOMAN.



CHIRATI INDIANS.

land of the Jesuits. As a substitute for the more practical process the Indians had been taught to imitate printed lettering with their pens. The patience and skill displayed by the dusky artists produced phenomenally successful results. On this point Don Vicente G. Quesada, the President of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Buenos Aires, speaks fully in his admirable book *La Vida Intelectual en la America Española*.

So adept did the Indians become in their task of copying that even in the case of missals, with their complicated and elaborate designs and characters, it was frequently almost impossible to distinguish the handworked copy from the printed original. A convincing proof of the art to which this extraordinary resemblance was brought lies in the confusion that some while ago prevailed concerning the actual date of the first introduction of printing into the mission country. This has been placed at a number of years previous to the date now known to be true, owing to the very excusable error of mistaking for printed works books which were in reality done by hand.

With such results already achieved, the success of the more complicated industry proved not less remarkable. It is not often that an author gives a willing testimonial to the printers of his work, but Father Serrano, writing to the general of his Order,

waxes enthusiastic. "The impression," he says, "and the many engravings that beautify it are the works of the finger of God, all the more wonderful since these instruments are a few poor Indians, new to the faith, and wanting the supervision of European masters."

It is extraordinary to reflect that such results were obtained from a wooden press, the timber for which was cut from the surrounding forest, from type contrived from tin extracted from the district, and from plates of copper the engraving of which was also the work of the Indians. The accomplishment, indeed, would sound incredible, were not an explanation at hand in the methods of the Jesuits. On this point I will turn again to Don Vicente Quesada, who deals with the subject in a lucid paragraph:—

"The company of Jesuits was wont to send to the missions priests who were acquainted with all the arts and crafts, and who, instructing the Indians in these, obtained a really extraordinary result, seeing that they taught by means of religious fervour and without the slightest introduction of material interest, seeing that neither wages nor money were known. The Indians, holding that to do their best was to fulfil a divine command, emulated one another in the perfection of their work and in a desire to obtain the praise of the priests. Thus it

was that in the art of printing, as in all others, the expert priests, usually brought from Germany, instructed the Indians in all things from the manufacture of the implements to the most complicated features of the work itself. These priests, who in the years of their laity had been masters of various crafts, found model apprentices in the Indians. These latter were soon promoted to the rank of officials, and in a short while were sufficiently expert to produce the necessary masterpiece which in Europe alone gave admission to the highest ranks of the artisan corporations. This is the explanation of how the Jesuits were enabled to instal presses and to print without having recourse to the introduction of implements from Spain."

To return to the first printed book of the missions, *On the Difference between the Temporal and the Eternal*, the volume is said to be profusely illustrated, the majority of the pictured subjects being allegorical. There was no doubt good reason for this, since the Guaraní language was—as it still remains in its pure form—notably deficient in all words expressive of abstract ideas.

For the printing of this work it was necessary to obtain the sanction of the ecclesiastical powers as well as that of the royal authority, hence the correspondence of Father Serrano with the general of his Order, from which I have quoted a fragment of one of

the letters. It has frequently been said that the first printing presses were established in the missions without any official permission whatever. As a matter of fact, nothing would have been easier than a clandestine procedure of the kind. Completely shut off as it was from the rest of the world, events of importance might well happen within the great area of the Reductions without any one outside the pale being a jot the wiser. Yet, since what is believed to be the first edition of the work in question states on its pages that it is printed by the necessary authority, the existence of these illicit presses becomes very doubtful. No doubt the error originally arose from a source already explained, the mistaking of pen work of the Indians for printed matter.

It was an easier matter for the Jesuits to obtain permissions of the kind than for the laity who dwelt in better-known districts. The Court of Spain and the Council of the Indies could not well have credited the publication of works in the Guaraní tongue, destined for sole circulation in the shadowy lands of the missions, with the power of wielding any material influence or of producing an inconvenient thirst for further knowledge. The authorities in Spain were probably quite ignorant of the fact that such books would be placed within the reach of nearly half a million people who were competent to read, write,

and to appreciate to a greater or lesser degree the contents of these volumes. Classifying the various contemporary cultured bodies of the continent, it is not too much to say that at the time the Indians of the missions provided the largest reading public in South America!

The ball having once been set rolling, a number of other publications appeared shortly after the production of the first. These consisted largely of dictionaries, catechisms, and Guaraní grammars. In 1624 the famous Father Antonio Ruiz de Montoya caused to be published an important work on the Guaraní language, which was fully provided with an imposing array of official licences to justify its existence.

Very little definite is known as to the scale on which these printing operations were carried out. Many editions of the same work are frequently stamped with varying sources of origin. Thus one will be dated from the town of Santa Maria la Mayor, and another from that of Nuestra Señora de Loreto, while yet others are simply marked as "printed in the missions." Don José Toribio Medina, a noted Chilian authority on the subject, surmises from the variety of the editions and the similarity of the type that one printer alone was responsible for the several publications. Here again I will quote Señor Quesada, who disputes this, as I think, with reason.

"It is necessary to bear in mind the circumstances," says this latter author, "in order to arrive at another conclusion. The priests did not pay for the work of the Indians; they gave them clothes, food, homes, and instruction. In the absence of private property the proceeds of labour went to the community. Thus the Company was well able to maintain without expense founts of type and printers in every one of the mission towns, since it was advisable to accustom the Indians to work, more especially to work of a sedentary and patient order. For the rest, the perfect uniformity of the various types need occasion no surprise, since even when the Indians were accustomed to work with the pen alone the result was so perfect that it was difficult to distinguish the copy from the original."

After the expulsion of the Jesuits, when it became more particularly the fashion to calumniate the work of the Order in every conceivable way, many doubts were cast on the point as to whether the missionaries had really possessed printing presses of their own. In 1784 the Viceroy of the River Plate, the Marquis of Loreto, was anxious for definite information on the point, and to this end he dispatched Don Gonzalo de Doblaz to the town of Santa Maria, then a desolate and practically deserted spot.

"I made a careful examination," says the latter, "and made the discovery that there had indeed been

a printing press at the place. Nothing remains now but the ruins of this, which was very badly constructed, and is now in fragments." He also discovered a certain quantity of tin type, which, then considered of no value, was being employed to repair dishes and vessels.

Whether this printing press was in reality as badly constructed as its discoverer asserts is open to question. It is unlikely in the extreme that an official of the Viceroy's would give a laudatory account of the products of the Order which had so recently been expelled from the continent. In any case, even were the object of the quality suggested, the credit due to the workers is increased rather than diminished, in view of the results they succeeded in producing by means of such poor implements.

This dismantled printing press of the Paraguayan missions did not stand alone in its fate. The countryside was littered with a countless number of such objects, which the inhabitants, obedient to the age of vandalism that succeeded, employed for any chance domestic purposes that might suit their ends.

It is more surprising to find that even in Córdoba, the university town of the Jesuits situated in the midst of the Spaniards themselves, no better use was made of such objects. After the expulsion of the Jesuits the Franciscans assumed control of the University. But they made no attempt to use the

printing press which they found there, either from want of capability or of will. In the end the unfortunate thing was destroyed and flung away. If such a thing could occur at Córdoba itself, the usage which these implements of the absent Jesuits received elsewhere may be imagined.

CHAPTER XX

THE EXPULSION OF THE ORDER

The decree of expulsion—"Occult and reserved reasons"—Alleged fear of the Jesuit power—Rumours and accusations—The danger of distance—The Indian labour question—Actual factors at work—Practical attitude of the colonists—Humanity displayed by Bucareli in the accomplishment of his task—Some charges brought against the governor—Precautions taken by the Government—The Jesuit power in case of resistance—Expulsion of the Fathers from the Spanish towns—Suppression of their establishments—The priests are sent oversea—The prospects in Misiones territory itself—Elaborate preparations—Peaceful submission of the Jesuits—What might have been—The attitude of the Indians—The new officials placed in charge—Bucareli's dispatches to the home government—Time-honoured accusations—The governor's instructions for the future of the Reductions—Decay of the settlements—Inefficiency of the new rulers—Bucareli returns to Spain, whence he sends a constitution for the Reductions—Adherence to the original policy of the Fathers—The methods of the new masters—Neglect and ill-treatment of the Guaranís—The inevitable end.

WHEN King Charles III. of Spain issued the decree for the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain and her dominions, he proclaimed that his reasons for the step were "occult" and "reserved," a statement which went to prove that, even in the eighteenth century, the condonation of slavery as a principle of colonisation was best held from open expression. In Spain itself, the enemies of the Order had sought

to bring about its downfall by suggesting that the power of the Jesuits, if allowed free play, might become greater than that of the Throne itself, and the King might become a mere puppet in the hands of an organisation which, working under religious semblance, sought to further secular ends. There may or may not have been sufficient grounds to render this a valid reason east of the Atlantic: with that point we are very little concerned. West of the ocean, the quest of fortune went hand in hand with slavery of the Indians, and the Jesuits brought about their own doom—laid its foundations in the day that they commenced the betterment of the native rather than lower him to the level of a mere brute working to amass wealth for his Spanish or Portuguese master.

The charge was levelled against the Order in America that they had acquired too much wealth and power for the common good, but in Paraguay, at least, their actual position made the charge an absurdity. Yet rumour, reaching across from Buenos Aires to Spain, easily took on the aspect of truth, and those who were opposed to the Jesuits in the new countries had many friends and supporters in the old: there was no electric cable in those days, and one may conjecture how the colonists sent home and kept alive stories of the growing power of the Order, and how they hinted at the possible menace

to secular authority arising from a continuance of that growth.

Contradiction of such stories would be futile, for the intercommunication between the old and new worlds was not sufficient in the eighteenth century to afford absolute confutation, nor to destroy the suspicion of a leaning toward the Jesuits and a desire to see them established as the dominant power, rather than that of the Crown. Such stories and suspicions once started, it was a comparatively easy matter to keep the stories alive and foster the suspicions to almost-certainties.

Behind such fabrications the real position was simple enough. Working with most unpromising material, and almost certainly with no motives beyond those of conversion and civilisation of the native races, the Jesuit missions in Paraguay had, while making men of the Guaraní Indians, established a semi-communism which left the practical, fortune-hunting colonist altogether out of the reckoning. It is true that this went far to deprive the latter of unlimited free labour, and came perilously near reducing him to working for a living. Beyond the influence of the Jesuit Reductions, his fellow-colonists had slaves in plenty—subject, of course, to the plastic regulations framed in Spain for the welfare of the natives—and the settler who found himself placed at a disadvantage in this manner sought, in

the expulsion of the hated Order, his only means of redress. It took two hundred years to bring about this redress, but in June 1767 the order was sent to Don Francisco de Paula Bucareli y Ursua, Governor of Buenos Aires, to accomplish the expulsion of the Jesuits from Paraguay.

This, rather than the many reasons adduced—whether by friends or foes of the Order—was the prime factor in the expulsion of the Jesuits from Paraguay. From a practical point of view, the attitude adopted by the colonists toward the missions was perfectly natural, though not by present-day standards perfectly justifiable. It is easy, viewing the matter through twentieth-century spectacles, to enter a brief on behalf of the priests, but let it be remembered that in the eighteenth century there were no twentieth-century opticians, and that the hard-headed—and often hard-hearted—colonists of Latin-American dependencies saw in Jesuit influence a real menace to their prosperity, and hated the missions accordingly. That conflict of interests which ended with the accomplishment of Bucareli's task was in reality a racial conflict, with the Jesuits representing the Indians, whom they sought to maintain in little less than equality with the Spanish and Portuguese occupants of the land. And, as is usual in racial contests, the Europeans overcame their antagonists in the end.

The sources, to which we must look for evidence of the manner in which the expulsion was carried out, are, as a matter of course, more in favour of the Crown than of the priests ; still, the mass of evidence on both sides goes to prove that Bucareli undertook his duty humanely, and accomplished a task which, though it could bring no credit on him, at least left him a character for conscientiousness, honesty, and singleness of purpose. He obeyed the King's decree, and no more.

One gathers from his prolix dispatches to Spain with reference to the event that he sought to salve his conscience for acting as the representative of might against religion, even sought to write himself into actual belief that he had not only obeyed his Sovereign, but the dictates of his own conscience. Certain it is that he inflicted no unnecessary hardships on these simple Jesuit missionaries, whom public opinion found profitable to confound and class with their brethren in Europe, many of whom, there is no doubt, really possessed the Machiavellian tendencies with which they were credited. Equally certain, it seems to be, that the retrogression and decay of Indian civilisation, which followed on the extinction of the Misiones, was no fault of Bucareli's. Avarice, loose interpretation of the reorganised constitution of the district, and unfitness for the work on the part of those who replaced the Jesuits in Paraguay, all

played a part in the Indian downfall, but Bucareli stands clear of that charge.

His enemies, wanting graver charges, accuse him of an excess of caution bordering on the ridiculous, but the facts justify him in this. His services to the Crown, distinguished though they were, had given him little or no experience of things American, and he held the ideas which obtained in Europe regarding the Jesuits: that they had not gone to the wilds of Paraguay without ulterior and possibly sinister motives, and that they were possessed of enormous wealth.

It was known, of course, that the missionaries possessed bodies of trained troops. Moreover, from the fact that from time to time the services of these had been lent to the King of Spain to assist his forces in the frequent wars against the Portuguese, the increasing efficiency and discipline of the Jesuit armies had not passed unnoticed. There was no doubt that these were capable of offering a successful resistance to the royal forces, and it was equally clear that it depended on the Jesuits whether their armed companies would fight against the dispossession of a territory granted to themselves and enriched by the fruits of two centuries' labour.

Thus in every village Bucareli saw a citadel, in every Jesuit the possible commander of a force formidable through numbers, and doubly to be

dreaded by their thorough knowledge of and command over the country into which he must advance with his scanty troops. The country of the missions was splendidly situated for effectual resistance, separated as it was from the outer world, and defended, save on one side, by almost impenetrable virgin forests and dangerous marshes.

So Bucareli determined to run no risks that could be avoided, and his first preparations concerned the removal of the Jesuits from Córdoba, Corrientes, Monte Video, and Santa Fé. On the night of 22nd July 1767, without the least show of resistance, the Jesuits were made prisoners, their colleges were suppressed, and the fabulous wealth with which the Order was credited found to have no existence. Neither Bucareli nor the treasury of Spain were appreciably richer when the frigate, *La Esmeralda*, with a hundred and fifty Jesuits on board, set sail for Spain, and Córdoba, Buenos Aires, Monte Video, and Santa Fé were at last swept clear of Jesuits.

The ease with which these initial measures were accomplished failed to reassure Bucareli with regard to the reception awaiting him in the Misiones territory itself, and he spent nearly a year in preparations, made as for the invasion of a hostile state. On 24th May 1768 he embarked with sixty dragoons and three companies of grenadiers, having first ordered two hundred of the militia of Asuncion to

guard the ford of the Tebicuari, and another body of two hundred strong to hold the port of San Miguel. The invading troops disembarked at Salto, on the Uruguay River. Here the force was divided, and the various parties were dispatched on the final stages of their journeys. Up to this point, Bucareli's generalship and discretion give somewhat of a stately air to the proceedings, but from Salto onward the resignation in place of anticipated resistance on the part of the Jesuits made farce of threatened tragedy. Bucareli had brought cannon against a potential enemy, and found nothing but a number of peaceful priests, who, with their congregations, were prepared loyally to obey the decree for their expulsion.

The charge had been laid against the Misiones' pioneers of seeking to undermine the power of the Crown in Paraguay, and to set up an independent government; the manner of their submission to the royal decree was a striking proof to the contrary. With the support of one hundred and fifty thousand souls, which was assuredly theirs, they had but to speak the word and neither Bucareli nor his men would have ever seen Buenos Aires again. All Misiones would have blazed with resistance at a signal from the Fathers, but the signal was not given.

The tameness of the proceedings must have afforded Bucareli a pleasant surprise. Don Francisco



A CHIRIGUANA WOMAN.

de Zabala went by Bucareli's order from Salto to seize six towns on the Uruguay; Captain Don Juan Francisco de la Riva Herrera was sent to occupy the Jesuit settlements on the Paraguay; while Bucareli himself, with the major portion of his force, marched on Yapeyu, the largest and most southerly situated of the missions.

The rest was simply a series of peaceful visits on the part of Bucareli and his emissaries, to whom the Jesuit Fathers in each town gave up the keys of their houses, submitting to chains and imprisonment as quietly as if this were a mere everyday happening. A characteristic exit, this, for the men who had civilised Paraguay, and had ruled it for nearly two centuries!

The honesty of the Jesuit attitude was undoubtedly transparent. Were any further proof required, it lies in the fact that, while on this occasion, restrained by their priests, the Guaranís retained a passive demeanour, and stood by in the mere character of spectators, at a later date, when approached by armies of notable strength, the Indians, no longer beneath the control of the missionaries, resented the armed invasion, and fought fiercely for their rights.

There went prisoners to Buenos Aires seventy-eight Jesuits and their Provincials. Their places were taken on the spot by priests of different Orders,

and by laymen, all unfitted for the work which the Jesuits had carried on. The newcomers were utterly devoid of mission experience, and the Guaraní was no half-hour problem for a newcomer's solution. But of this more later.

On 16th September 1768 Bucareli returned to Buenos Aires, having accomplished his task in little over three months, and, as the result proved, having completely nullified the results of two centuries of patient effort and self-sacrificing devotion. Yet the Viceroy was but a tool, completing the work which the attitude of the Jesuit Fathers toward the Indians had initiated, and to which the charges of Bishop Cardenas, in the course of his struggle with the Order in the seventeenth century, had given definite shape.

Having completed the work of destruction, Bucareli found himself faced with the task of substitution. A new constitution had to be framed for the government of the mission Indians. Many charges of injustice, enforcement of slave labour, and aggrandisement at the expense of the Guaraní Indians, had been levelled against the Jesuit rule. In his dispatches to the home government Bucareli cited these charges as a species of justification for the existence of the royal decree, and as an apology for his own act in carrying that decree into effect.

These accusations were, of course, nothing beyond

a repetition of the time-honoured complaints that had been levelled with varying success against the missionaries for two centuries. A new emphasis, however, was placed on their refusal to permit their converts to learn the Spanish tongue, a reluctance which they had explained with perfect and consistent frankness from the first.

Beyond this, the ancient tradition was dug up afresh to the effect that the Jesuits kept the Indians in slavery and amassed huge fortunes in the Misiones territory. Brabo's inventory of these "fortunes" shows that the Fathers went forth from the scene of their labours, neither taking with them nor leaving behind any store of worldly goods worth mention, unless the huge quantity of snuff which each priest took from the common store, to console him on his long voyage, be counted worth a passing remark.

Bucareli, in order that nothing should be lacking, made a condemnatory stew with Cardenas' seven charges as ingredients, and added it as a tasty dish at the end of his dispatch, though what purpose beyond that of prolixity could be served by accusing men already condemned and sentenced, and with the sentence, moreover, already carried into effect, it is hard to guess. The most charitable solution to the puzzle is that the Viceroy, being an upright man, sought to salve his own conscience by justifying himself in the eyes of others, whose approbation

might in time bring sufficient self-deceit to render possible a complete self-satisfaction.

Thus Bucareli condemned the Jesuit rule, and, casting about for some form of government with which to replace it, framed a series of instructions on 23rd August 1768, for the guidance of his interim successor, before he himself quitted Candelaria on his return journey to Buenos Aires. These instructions were modelled on principles precisely similar to those on which the Jesuit rule, which he had so rigorously condemned, had been carried out. Having seen the error of Jesuit ways, Bucareli made up his mind to perpetuate error by endeavouring to maintain Paraguay under a like form of government. Surely no further refutation of the charges against the Misiones Fathers is necessary.

For two years longer Bucareli remained at Buenos Aires, his labours divided between the affairs of the missions and other troubles. But the welfare of the missions was a fast vanishing quantity, though the Viceroy's code of instructions was wise and liberal, and represented an honest attempt to govern the Indians for their own benefit.

In these instructions the letter of the law remained, but the spirit had gone with the Misiones Fathers, and the district was now in charge of men whose object was less self-denying than had been that of

their predecessors. Given the intention, the ability to administer a law, framed for benefit, as an oppression, is a comparatively easy matter. In this instance exceptional opportunities offered themselves for this end, since Bucareli had other matters, toward the conclusion of his Viceroyalty, to occupy his attention. Thus the missions were perforce left to subordinates for administration.

The year 1771 found Don Juan José Vertiz governing the River Plate Provinces, and in that year Bucareli sent from San Lorenzo in Spain a constitution for the thirty towns of Paraguay, a document which bore witness to the ability and wisdom with which the Jesuits had ruled by a complete and absolute adherence to their policy. Having wasted much ink in condemning the communism and isolation which the Jesuits had enforced on the Indians, the ex-Viceroy sets forth the means by which these two characteristic features of the rule maintained by the dispossessed Order were to be perpetuated. All things were to remain precisely the same, with the solitary and scarcely noticeable omission that the well-being of the Indians—more through interpretation of the laws than by the manner in which they were framed, it is true—became a very secondary consideration. The object which the Misiones Fathers had laboured to attain was no longer of consequence. Dean Funes waxes

eloquent over the result of this altered state of affairs.

“An imperious tone of order,” he says, “was substituted for the paternal manner (of the Misiones Fathers), and as a deaf man has to be taught by blows, that was the teaching they (the Indians) had to bear. . . . A wall of hatred and contempt began to arise between the Indians and their masters; and the priests, who by virtue of their office ought to have been the ministers of peace, being without influence to command . . . and not entirely irreproachable in their ministry . . . added themselves to the discord and dissension which arose.”

Under the advice of Bucareli, whose disinterested services to the Crown gave weight to his words, attempts were made to remedy this “discord and dissension.” Other priests and laymen were sent out to replace the incompetent and vicious occupants of those posts from which the Jesuits had been expelled; but with that expulsion the evil had been accomplished, and no power of Spain could stop the downfall of the missions, or bring back the spirit which went with the Jesuit Fathers.

These newly constituted authorities looked on the Indians as beings of another order from themselves. They made light of religious duties, and treated their flocks as servitors, nothing more, according to them the position generally allotted to

the conquered races in Spanish-American settlements.

The Jesuits had been the Guaraní Indians' wall, sheltering them from the methods usually pursued in Spanish colonisation of the period ; now that the wall was broken down and utterly destroyed, the Indians went back to the ways of their primitive life. They made no resistance to the new order, but the missions in their original form simply ceased to be. The vast herds of cattle, no longer tended, strayed at their own sweet will over the face of the land, pastures became overgrown, and cultivation gave place to rank, useless vegetation. Misiones was no longer a fertile territory, but a grave of spoilt labour, and a monument to the result of sustained effort on the part of avarice-blinded men, whose influence induced Spain to send a nation back from civilisation to savagery.

CHAPTER XXI

THE LAST STATE

The retrogression of the Guaranís—An alleged proof of the inefficiency of the Jesuit rule—An argument that cuts both ways—Imitation as a tacit confession of error—Results of a lack of experience—Indifference of the Guaraní—The secret of the wealth of the missions—The force of intelligence and labour—Census of the Jesuit herds and flocks—The missionaries as pastoralists—A patriarchal community—The sole evidence of treasure—Steady decrease of the cattle and sheep—Census of cattle in 1838—The crops cease to exist—Some isolated survivals—The origin of the town of Paysandú—The work of Padre Sandú—A solitary community—Sufferings of the mission Indians—They are harassed by neighbouring tribes—Brazilian aggression—The property of the Reductions is handed back to the Indians themselves—Failure of a tardy concession—Decrease of the native population—The War of Independence—The Guaranís recruited for the patriot cause—Artigas and the Indians—The Uruguayan leader employs them in the civil wars—Plight of the army—Andresito, Mission Indian and general—His reputation—His adventures and exploits—The survival of instinct—Final destruction of the Eastern Jesuit settlements—Later dispersal of the Paraguayan Indians—Traces of Jesuit influence in later years—The end of the Reductions—The triumph of nature—The story of the ruins—The reawakening of Misiones—Conclusion.

THE rapidity with which the Indians, once removed from the control of the missionaries, reverted to a crude and unpolished existence, the manner of which was only a little removed from the primitive ways



CHIUNIPÍ INDIANS.

of their forefathers, has before now been held up as a culminating proof of the inefficiency of the Jesuit rule. It has been asserted that the veneer which became rubbed off so rapidly, when removed from the care of the masters who were so continually occupied in polishing it, must have been shallow indeed.

It is likely enough that there may be something in the argument. Even at the height of their prosperity the missionaries, according to their own confession, were obliged to retain an unremitting watch over the Indian temperament. It was only by dint of practical precautions and the instilling of religious fervour that the sensuality, indolence, and want of forethought inherent in the Guaraní temperament were kept in check.

Even when considered on its own merits, the argument cuts both ways. If the influence of the Jesuits survived their presence by so little, the enormous difficulties which they overcame in obtaining it become clear, and the tremendous disadvantages under which they must have laboured throughout are no longer to be denied.

It has already been explained that, their object once attained, the efficiency of the Jesuit methods was acknowledged in the most convincing fashion by those who beforehand had shown themselves most virulent in their condemnation. This they

effected by that sincerest form of flattery, imitation. The secular government which succeeded that of the missionaries endeavoured in every practical way to continue on the lines which had proved so successful in the case of the Jesuits. But the experience of more than two centuries was not to be absorbed in the space of a few years, and with the departure of the moving spirits of the missions the government became futile and the settlements chaotic.

The main incentive of the new rulers undoubtedly sprang from motives concerned with practical industry and money-making, features of which these very folk had so frenziedly accused the Jesuits in the past. For their own sake these matters did not interest the Guaraní in the least—even to this day they leave him remarkably cold—and his heart had gone out of the venture. The life, crafts, and arts of the missions were no more. The successors of the Jesuits found themselves flogging a dead horse.

A fair test of the permanent effects of the Jesuit government could only have been afforded had the Guaranís been left to their own devices. There is little doubt that they would have remained together in their accustomed communities; for they had contracted a strong affection for their settled homes, and resented by force of arms the later efforts to disperse them that were made by both Spaniards and Portuguese. That the ultimate result would

have been any other than that which actually came about I strongly doubt. But, as I have endeavoured to point out, the fact surely redounds to the credit, rather than to the fault, of the Jesuits.

As it was, it soon became evident to the successors of the Jesuits that the secret of the material wealth of the missions was dependent on the spirit prevailing among their inhabitants rather than on any precise code of laws by which the country might be regulated. Although the Jesuits had lacked the private gold and treasure with which they had been supposed to be glutted, the prosperity of the settlements themselves was by no means inconsiderable. This had not been accrued by delving into the depths of the earth; it had been won from the surface of the pastoral and agricultural lands by force of steady intelligence and consistent toil.

On the expulsion of the missionaries a rough census was taken of the herds and flocks of the Reductions. Considering the difficulties under which the officials must have laboured in their task, the figures arrived at show an ambitious and rather astonishing attempt at accuracy down to the very last unit. These are given as 769,353 head of cattle, 94,983 horses, and 221,537 sheep. As pastoralists, therefore, the Jesuits had been persons of no small importance.

Like the patriarchs of old, however, the Jesuits

had made no attempt to convert this wealth of their land into gold or any other mere symbol of power. With the increase of their herds, flocks, and crops, came the benefits to their converts of a greater sustaining power, and of a surplus that might be exchanged for the necessary articles from without. The sole evidence of treasure in the popular sense of the word was confined to the interiors of the churches, which were lavishly and richly decorated. This, however, was for the purpose of introducing an impressive effect, and not for the mere possession of valuable plate and ornaments.

From the day of the Jesuit expulsion the herds of cattle and flocks of sheep diminished steadily, until in 1838 it was found that the once numerous companies of cattle had dwindled down to the insignificant number of eight thousand. As to the crops, although the *yerba maté*, growing wild in the forest, offered itself as generously as ever for the gathering, those other products which demanded a sowing ere their harvest could be reaped had for all practical intents and purposes ceased to exist. The industrial result, indeed, was as lamentable as could possibly be. It was as though some reckless boys had seized hold of a complicated machine, and, unable to reconstruct it, had pulled the thing to bits in order to see the nature of its works.

To all intents and purposes a clean sweep of the

Jesuits had been made. So far as I remember, according to the official records, only one single priest was allowed to continue his existence in the land of the missions, and that merely because his age and infirmities prevented his being removed from the field of his labours, a concession that redounds not a little to the humanity of the officials engaged in the task of expulsion.

There are isolated cases, however, of a gathering of Indians and of the re-forming of settlements in new places in which the communities endeavoured to continue their existence just as it had been led in the days when the missionaries and their converts were the undisputed owners of the land.

On the site of one of these spreads the modern Uruguayan town of Paysandú, on the banks of the great river. *Pay* in the Guaraní language signifies Padre, and the name of Paysandú is derived from that of Padre Sandú, who, after infinite toil and trouble, succeeded in establishing this community in what was then a very remote spot. It was one of the few tranquil and insignificant pools left by the receding tide. Here, adored, it is said, by his disciples, Father Sandú taught reading, writing, and music. Here, too, a humble wooden chapel was erected, and in the midst of his small congregation Father Sandú lived until the day of his death, twenty-

two years after the founding of this small and peaceful community.

I have said that the only fair test as to the permanent effects of the Jesuit government would have been that of leaving the forsaken Guaranís to their own devices. But this was never to be their fate. As the vicissitudes of history would have it, the unfortunate mission Indians were not long left undisturbed even in the care of their new and unsympathetic patrons. They suffered severely not only at the hands of those set above them, whose methods became increasingly military as time went on. The neighbouring tribes of Indians, more especially the Charrúas, no longer held in check by the presence of the disciplined troops of the Jesuits, harried the unfortunate Guaranís whenever the opportunity occurred. The Brazilians, moreover, utilised the occasion to capture a number of the old Jesuit Reductions, and to add them permanently to their territory.

In 1801, the Marquis de Avites, Viceroy of the River Plate, in a genuine effort to render service to these unfortunate folk, issued a decree freeing them from masters who had by now become nothing more nor less than slave-owners. In the hope that it would once again become fertile, the property of the Reductions was handed over to the Indians themselves. Whatever might have been the results of this plan if carried out in the first instance, its in-

ception came too late, and the settlements continued to languish.

When the fierce War of Independence broke out between Spain and her dissatisfied South American colonies, its beginning saw the Indian communities disorganised, apathetic, and sadly shrunk in numbers and size. In many cases the population of the various centres could scarcely number a quarter of that which they had formerly boasted. Many of the remaining natives, however, were recruited to serve the patriot cause, with what immediate benefit to themselves is, of course, doubtful.

Yet, although their individuality as a community was destroyed, the mission Indians left their mark here and there upon the path of history for some way further yet. They played their part in the whirl of civil strife that followed the expulsion of the Spaniards from the Provinces of the River Plate. Thus Artigas, the Uruguayan national hero, when he waged his desperate wars against the Brazilians and Argentines, recruited his army largely from the Indians still resident in the shells of the missions.

Although more than half a century had passed, and the progress of the world had continued unabated during that time, the military equipment of these Indians differed widely from that which had been theirs when under the care of the missionaries. In the place of its once proud uniform this poor army wore

a loin-cloth for its total summer costume, supplemented by a rough hide flung about the shoulders for use during the chilly days of winter. For arms it had to content itself for the most part with lassos and slings and the blades of knives attached to the end of poles. Thus even in practical methods of warfare the retrogression had been as marked as in all other respects.

Notwithstanding this dearth of warlike necessities and the hardships they were forced to endure, these relics of the Jesuits proved themselves staunch and trustworthy soldiers, as the history of Uruguay will show. Indeed, one of their number, Andresito, attained to real power. He became one of the leading generals of the army, the right-hand man for a while of Artigas himself, the famous Protector of Uruguay.

It is so unusual to meet with the evidence of special individuality in a Guaraní, whether before, during, or after, the Jesuit rule, that this Andresito demands more than a passing word. His name is associated with many bloody deeds. How far this is justified it is difficult to tell; but one may reasonably suppose that the rumour is not without some reason, since at that peculiarly sanguinary period a man with unreddened hands represented something in the nature of a freak.

However this may have been, Andresito's tem-



CHIRIGUANA MAN WITH LONG HAIR AND *TEMBETA*.

perament distinguished his personality not a little from those of his fellow-generals. I have happened across this Andresito in a previous book, from which I will snatch a paragraph which will render some rough idea of his character:—

“Andresito was an Indian from the deserted Jesuit missions who commanded a considerable force of his own race. He appears to have interspersed his dark deeds with some evidence of better qualities and even of a grim humour. A coarse instance of this latter is supplied when he entered the town of Corrientes in the heyday of Artigas’s power. On this occasion the Indian troops behaved with no little restraint towards the terrified inhabitants, and contented themselves with levying contributions towards the clothing of the almost naked army. This accomplished, Andresito determined to exhibit the social side of his temperament. He organised several religious dramas, and followed these by a ball in honour of the principal residents of the town. These, however, failed to attend, their reluctance to dancing with Indians overcoming their prudence. On learning the reason from some crassly honest person, the enraged Andresito caused these too particular folk to be mustered in the main plaza of the town. There he obliged the men to scour the roadway, while the ladies were made to dance with the Indian troops.”

Now this behaviour of Andresito’s—in whatever

light the proud inhabitants may have regarded it—is undoubtedly as instructive as it was quaint. It shows, at all events, that the instincts, due to the habits implanted by the Jesuits within his ancestors, still remained with him, and bore fruition in the shape of these religious dramas. His revenge on the townsfolk is eloquent of the wilder influences of a later age. That this was not in the least concerned with any racial training is amply proved by the touch of rough humour it exhibits. Many allegations have been brought against the Jesuits, but even the most irresponsible of their accusers has felt himself constrained to draw the line somewhere. He has never gone the length of charging either the patient, serious priests or their ingenuous converts with a sense of humour!

The period at which we have arrived brings us to the end of the history of the Eastern Jesuit settlements. When Artigas in the end suffered the reverses that were inevitable in the face of such odds as those with which he had to contend, the victorious Portuguese in 1817 revenged themselves by the final destruction of those few remnants of the original Reductions as had contrived to survive until then, while the desperate methods adopted by Artigas in his defence left those between the Paraná and Uruguay Rivers in little better condition. In Paraguay proper the descendants of the converts contrived

to cling for a longer period to those neighbourhoods, marked by the crumbling masses of masonry, with which they still, from the dim force of tradition, continued to associate themselves. In 1848, when the first President of Paraguay, Lopez, finally dispersed the attenuated communities, some six thousand Indians were found populating the sites of the Reductions.

Thus even this last shattering of the Indian communities was effected, not by the will of the Guaranís, but by the employment of force from without. What would have happened had the shepherdless Indians been left undisturbed it is useless to surmise. As I have said, one thing seems certain, however—that they would have clung together in the communities originally formed for them.

Although at one moment the influence of the Jesuits has been condemned on account of its fleeting effects, at another it has been held responsible for many things. The docility of these Paraguayan Indians is said to have been one of the causes that made possible in the new Republic a tyranny such as that of Francia and of his equally autocratic successor, the second Lopez. The discipline and obedience, moreover, of the troops who fought under the latter Dictator in the tremendous struggle against the neighbouring Republics is attributed to the same cause. It is possible enough that there may be some

degree of reason for both these assumptions, although the happenings that intervened between the expulsion of the Jesuits and the Paraguayan war were sufficiently varied and dramatic to have changed the disposition and instincts of a race a dozen times over.

But these subjects have led us away from the Jesuit missions themselves. While civil and international war raged, the actual sites of the towns were utterly neglected. Few even remembered their existence. All the while the subtropical vegetation had been creeping back to reconquer the spots that had been wrested from its shades. Little by little the open stretches of the fields lost their smoothness as the young bushes and trees began to swell upon their surface, until in the end they lay, lost and obscured, beneath a triumphant tangle of vegetation. In the course of years the spots that had resounded to the laughter and hymns and labour of the converts became dense, impenetrable jungle.

The buildings of the towns themselves held out longer. But in the end their fate was similar; for they suffered from the destructive power of man as well as that of nature. The walls once loosened and crumbling, chance dwellers in the neighbourhood availed themselves of the conveniently cut stone. Thus the reed framework of many a rough *ranch*o would be fortified by fragments of intricately carved masonry, and here and there a capital that had been

poised proudly on high would find itself set in the midst of the lowly mud walls of the hut of a solitary Indian who dwelt in the now forsaken place.

The decorative and symbolic features of the churches met with the most rapid end of all. You may yet light upon a certain number of statues, armless, headless, and occasionally broken to fragments, lying almost hidden beneath a covering of grasses and bushes. The condition of these is not the work of time ; it is that of man unaided. Upon the arms and about the bodies of these statues were jewels, and gold, and silver, and there were many who considered cold stone an unprofitable resting-place for such treasures. Hence the mutilations, which occurred, as a matter of fact, with remarkably small delay when once the settlements had been deprived of their guardian Jesuits.

The great churches and public edifices were the last to go. Even to this day their destruction has only been partial, since the massive gaunt shells of the structures still rear themselves sombrely upwards, shaded by their curtains of branches, and suffering with grim dignity the cactus and shrubs and plants that sprout with mocking exuberance from the crevices in their walls.

The land about them is awakening again. Its astonished atmosphere has begun to echo back the blast of steam whistlings, and the clanking of buffers

and railway wheels—very different sounds these from the music and chantings of the processions of long ago that blended so admirably with the rustlings of the leaves and the cries of the birds. This time Misiones has been jerked into life with a shock. But it is unlikely that the ruins in the forests will suffer. On the contrary, it is probable that they will meet with the respect which is their due when their history becomes more widely known. It is possible that even the Indians themselves may replace the dim legendry that floats in their minds by a knowledge of what actually befell their ancestors in the days when the districts lay as a state sufficient to itself, occupied to the full with its own religion and its own industries, shut off by impassable barriers from the rest of the world.

HISTORICAL APPENDIX

IN nearly every instance, the ecclesiastics who accompanied the *conquistadores* of Spanish America were Franciscans, and San Francisco Solano, the first priest who rose to much note as a missionary in the southern territories, was a Franciscan. In 1588-89 he made a memorable journey through the Chaco from Peru to Paraguay. Although it is stated that the Jesuits sent two priests to Bahia in Brazil ten years after the foundation of their Order, both in Brazil and Paraguay the Franciscans appear to have preceded them. Solano spent two years at Asuncion, working among the Guaraní Indians, who at that time peopled the whole of Paraguay. Their numbers, variously estimated, may be said never to have exceeded a million.

The first organised attempt at the conversion of the Guaraní Indians by Jesuits appears to have been made in 1586, when Fathers Angulo and Alfonso Bárcena set out from Santa Maria de las Charcas, in Bolivia, at the request of the Bishop of Santiago, who had appealed for missionaries from the Jesuit Order. These two priests commenced their work in the province of Guayrá, where, a little later, they were joined by Fathers Juan Solano and Thomas

Fields, who had already penetrated among the tribes of the Chaco, and by Father Estezan Grao.

In 1593 a number of new arrivals appeared on the scene, and the mission colony extended its work to the Chiriguanás, this labour being undertaken by two priests named Ortega and Vellarnao. A year or two later witnessed the foundation of the Jesuit college at Asuncion.

By the end of the sixteenth century the work of the Society of Jesus had made a firm footing in Paraguay, and in 1602 Acquaviva, realising the necessity for united rather than independent action, called together all the Jesuits working in Paraguay and the River Plate for a conference, at which the general opinion might be gathered as to the best policy to be pursued for their common good. Up to that time the missionaries of the Order had been under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishop of Peru, but now it was felt that the time had arrived for separation from that authority, and concerted action under their own head.

As a result of this conference, in 1605 Father Diego Torres was appointed Provincial of the Jesuits of Paraguay and Chili, by the heads of the Order at Rome—matters moved slowly in those days. Torres landed with fifteen priests at Lima, others arrived at the same time at Buenos Aires, and both parties set out for Paraguay.

At this point the trouble which beset the Jesuits throughout the period of their work, and finally contributed largely to their expulsion, began to press hardly on them. From the commencement they had



TOBA BOY IN FEAST DRESS.

found that they were expected to overlook, and in some cases even to connive at, the enslavement of the Indians by their conquerors, both in Paraguay and Tucuman. Father Valdivia, expelled from Santiago on this account, sought refuge in Tucuman, where he found the condition of affairs so intolerable that he went to Madrid to ask from King Philip III. protection for the Indians.

In 1608 King Philip issued royal letters patent to the Jesuit Order for the conversion of the Indians inhabiting the province of Guayrá. The governor of the colony, Arias de Saavedra, acquiesced in the scheme of colonisation put forward by the Jesuit missionaries, and now, with the official seal put upon their efforts, the priests commenced systematic work throughout the colony.

In 1609 Fathers Maceta and Cataldino set out from Asuncion and founded the Reduction of Loreto on the upper Paraná. This, the first permanent establishment of the famous missions, was founded in a district which is little known even up to the present time, and here the Indians flocked in such numbers that the priests described the result of their efforts as "miraculous." In a very little time it was found necessary to establish a second Reduction, to which they gave the name of San Ignacio.

In order to secure and retain the confidence of the Guaranís, the Jesuits found themselves obliged from the first to restrain communication with the Spanish settlements, and thus, perforce, they commenced the policy of isolation which in after years formed a charge to bring against them. The Indians found

in the Reduction a refuge from the Spanish and Portuguese colonists, whom they with justice regarded as persecutors and oppressors. The initial successes of the missions were largely due to the fear which the Guaranís had of the Paulistas, or inhabitants of San Paulo of Brazil, a town in which were gathered all the cut-throats and desperadoes who had banded together for their common good out of Portuguese and Spanish expeditions, and whose chief source of revenue was the sale of Indian slaves which they captured on their raids and marketed among the *encomenderos* of the country.

By 1629—that is, in twenty years from the commencement of the work—twenty Jesuit missions had been founded. In 1612 Don Francisco de Alfaro had reported to the Spanish Government that the Guaranís and Guaycurús should not be enslaved, and, as the colonists in Asuncion considered that the influence of the Jesuits prompted the report, they expelled the priests from the town. But, though the Jesuit college was temporarily transferred to Santiago de Chile, the work of the missions went on.

Meanwhile the raids from San Paulo were extending farther and farther afield, as Indians grew scarce near at hand, and the Paulistas began to make incursions on the Reductions of the upper Paraná, and gradually extended their devastating work throughout the territory of Guayrá. In 1629 they sacked and destroyed the mission of San Antonio, driving off the Indian converts for sale as slaves, and within a year the Reductions of San Miguel and Jesus Maria met a like fate, but at the Reduction

of Concepcion a certain Father Salazar succeeded in maintaining a defence until another priest, Father Cataldino, marshalled a force of converts and, marching on the mission, raised the siege when the garrison was reduced to the last extremities of hunger.

These are merely instances of the many incursions of the Paulistas, the effect of whose work was to reduce the influence of the priests on the Guaranís, as these latter found their spiritual mentors unable to prevent their being captured and sold away into slavery. But the time of need brought the man to fill it in the person of Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, who, arriving at Asuncion in 1612, set to work to combat the influence of the Spanish settlers against the Jesuits. He worked unremittingly up to 1627, when he was appointed head of the missions of Guayrá, and in 1628 he made the acquaintance of Padre Diaz Taño, who became his chief lieutenant in subsequent and greater labours.

In 1631 the Mamelucos of San Paulo overran the province of Guayrá to such an extent that Montoya sent Father Diaz Taño to the Governor of Paraguay, Don Luis de Cespedes, to beg for assistance. This the Governor said he was unable to grant, and, finding their position no longer tenable, the Jesuits determined, after numerous conferences and discussions, to migrate, taking their Guaranís with them. Nominally under the Provincial, Padre Francisco Lopez Truxillo, but in reality under Ruiz Montoya, the great march was organised. Rafts, boats, and canoes were collected, and with a following

of twelve thousand Guaranís Montoya set out down the upper Paraná, while the Paulistas burned and destroyed the deserted mission stations.

All went well on the march until the party reached the ninety miles of falls which extend down this river. Here came eight days of marching through trackless forests, uninhabited except by fierce and savage tribes ; fever broke out and killed many, hunger accounted for many more, and the expedition, consisting as much of women and children as of men, reached the foot of the falls in a state of utter exhaustion and despair. Montoya, aided by Fathers Suarez, Espinosa, and Contreras, laboured heroically, and got the people to march on ; they found a temporary refuge in the Reduction of the Nativity on the Acaray, and at Santa Maria on the Iguassú. Famine, consequent on the influx of so large a number, carried off eleven hundred of the emigrants, and Montoya, in order to save those who remained, moved farther on to a point where he founded two Reductions, naming them Loreto and San Ignacio, after the two first founded in Guayrá.

Having determined on the place of settlement, Montoya purchased ten thousand head of cattle with the money allowed by the King of Spain to the Jesuits of Guayrá, and settled his people, after a perilous journey of nearly five hundred miles through trackless and dangerous country. This retreat of Montoya's stands as the greatest achievement in the history of the Jesuits of Paraguay.

Now came a period of tranquillity, in which the priests developed their work and founded mission

after mission among the Guaranís. In 1632 Fathers Jean Ranconier and Mançilla went out northward to found a mission among the Itatines, but the tribe was shy of them, and the spot was too near San Paulo. Just as the efforts of the priests seemed about to meet with success, the Paulistas came down and destroyed the mission, after their usual fashion.

A year later arose the first trouble between the Bishop of Paraguay and the Jesuits. The former pressed for tithes on the missions, and a certain Padre Romero went to Asuncion and displayed a papal bull and an order from the Council of the Indies, by which he caused the Bishop to withdraw his illegal claim. The arrival of the Provincial of the Order at Asuncion with an order from the King, signifying that the Jesuits were to have complete control of the Indians, clinched the victory. The royal order condemned in no measured terms all personal service, by which was implied forced labour, among the Indians, and checkmated both the Bishop and the Governor of Paraguay, who had also put forward claims on the missions. This assertion on the part of the Jesuits set them against the Governor and Bishop, and furnished yet another cause of grievance against them.

Montoya went to Spain to plead the Jesuit cause before the King, and succeeded in obtaining all his requests on behalf of the Indians. Father Alfaro was appointed head of the missions, and during his rule it was determined to evacuate three missions which still remained in Guayrá, as the Paulistas grew more and more troublesome ; in three companies,

under Father Christobal Arenas, this second exodus was accomplished, and another band of twelve thousand Indians was led to safety on fertile territory between the Uruguay and Paraná.

Now there grew up a new danger to the Jesuit cause; the Franciscans commenced to dispute with the Jesuits the right to certain missions, and this dissension, commencing in 1638 at Jujuy in the Argentine territories, spread to Paraguay, and went smouldering on while Montoya and Diaz Taño pleaded the Jesuit cause in Spain, up to the time when Cardenas, a Franciscan, was appointed Bishop of Paraguay.

Montoya never returned to Paraguay, for on his return from Madrid the heads of his Order detained him at Lima. He died there at the age of seventy, having given up all the best years of his life to the welfare of the Indians, and accomplished as much as any one individual in that cause. He stands as one of the great figures of the Paraguayan missions, if not actually the greatest man that this work produced.

Don Bernadino de Cardenas was appointed Bishop of Asuncion in Paraguay through the influence of his friend, Juan de Solorzano, and he entered his new see by way of Salta, Santa Fé, and Corrientes in 1642, having delayed as much as possible in the hope that the papal bull, necessary to confirm his appointment, might reach him *en route*. He entered Asuncion, however, without having received the papal authority, and at once exceeded his rights by celebrating Mass in the

cathedral and naming Cristobal Sanchez as his Vicar-General. The Jesuit church was made use of at the same time for the celebration of Mass, by the party which considered that Cardenas was exceeding his authority in assuming the dignities of bishop before the arrival of the papal bull; here, at once, Cardenas found cause of offence in the Jesuit priests.

For a time, Cardenas managed to maintain a friendship with the Governor of Asuncion, Gregorio de Hinostrosa, but the new bishop was one who demanded from his friends absolute acquiescence in, and even submission to, his own plans. Giving out that all his deeds were the result of direct orders by the Holy Ghost, Cardenas stripped and demolished the church and convent of a Dominican settlement in the vicinity of Asuncion, and dug up the corpse of a suicide which had been buried at cross-roads, interring it in the Church of the Incarnation and performing the funeral rites himself. By the commission of a number of outrages on public feeling of this kind, he was on the eve of losing the last vestiges of his hold on the people of Asuncion, when the papal bulls arrived, brought by his nephew, Pedro de Cardenas. The Bishop at once intimated to the people that the Pope had given him unlimited authority, both spiritual and temporal, in Paraguay, and proceeded to exercise his temporal authority by releasing one Ambrosio Morales, a sub-officer of the Inquisition, whom Hinostrosa had imprisoned. Pedro de Cardenas, the nephew, took the Governor's acquiescence in this release as a sign of weakness, and publicly loaded him with abuse and insulting language.

The Governor, desirous of maintaining peace, endured this in silence, a policy which encouraged the Bishop to fresh exactions and more abuse of his supposed temporal powers. Open rupture came when the Bishop demanded that the Governor should make over to him the Indians belonging to the Society of the Holy Sacrament, which Hinostrosa refused to do. Thereupon Cardenas fell into a fury and abused the Governor to his face, when Hinostrosa, not to be outdone, flung in the Bishop's teeth the questionable conduct of his nephew with a certain *jeune femme bien faite* who had accompanied this Pedro de Cardenas on his voyage to Asuncion.

These personal recriminations led to the first excommunication of the Governor by Cardenas, and this was put on and taken off twice in the same week. A little later, the Bishop authorised a certain Diego Hernandez, a Portuguese, to wear a sword, and the Governor threw Hernandez in prison for bearing arms against his regulations. Cardenas issued a third excommunication, but Hinostrosa laughed at it, and ordered the execution of Hernandez. The trouble was subsequently patched up, Hernandez released from prison instead of being executed, and the excommunication again cancelled.

And now Cardenas commenced his campaign against the Jesuits. By intrigue and underhanded work he strove to undermine their authority and influence, until Don Melchior Maldonado, Bishop of Tucuman, wrote in consequence of a rumour that had reached him of Cardenas' doings, and warned the latter to desist. Then again the feud between



JESUIT RUINS, MISIONES TERRITORY.



STATUE AT APOSTOLES.

Cardenas and the Governor broke out, brought to a head by the open licentiousness of the Bishop's nephew, whom the Governor dragged from refuge in the Convent of St. Francis, and left half naked, gagged, and bound for two days on the river bank. Pedro finally escaped in a canoe to Corrientes, the Governor strove to capture Cardenas, and the latter rained down another excommunication and incited the preachers in the various churches to anathematise Hinostrosa. The public took sides with the opposing powers, and Cardenas appealed to the Jesuits for aid against the Governor. The latter, knowing that anything they said or did would be brought against them later, declined to commit themselves to either side, and Cardenas, to win public sympathy, appeared naked in a sack, and scourging himself, in the streets of Asuncion.

The feud between Governor and Bishop went on, increasing in virulence, until late in 1643 Cardenas proclaimed a general interdict which closed all the churches, and both parties sent statements of their grievances to the High Court at Charcas. The Bishop appointed a new arrival, the Franciscan Father Truxillo, his Vicar-General, with power to bind and loose the excommunicated, and himself retired to the village of Yaguaron to await the decision of the High Court. Truxillo, being less violent and impatient than his superior, inaugurated his official duties by absolving the Governor and all whom Cardenas had placed under the interdict.

There followed another excommunication and absolution of Hinostrosa by the Bishop, who then

turned his attention to the Jesuits, and affronted them by declaring that he intended relieving them of the education of the young, following this up by the issue of an edict which forbade them to preach or hear confessions. Father Lopez, Provincial of the Dominicans, now informed the Governor that the Bishop sought to expel the Jesuits from Paraguay, and warned him not to allow himself to be made use of in this design, whereupon the Governor resorted to a species of diplomacy which caused Cardenas to think that there was little or no opposition to his plans, and that the expulsion of the Order of the Society of Jesus would be a comparatively easy matter.

In 1644, preaching at Yaguaron, Cardenas gave publicity to the seven charges against the Jesuits which, after a lapse of over a hundred years, were destined to go far in bringing about the downfall of the missions in Paraguay. The charges were that the Jesuits prevented the Indians from paying taxes to the Crown, kept back tithes, concealed rich mines which they worked for their own benefit, divulged the secrets of the confessional, attempted complete sovereignty of the mission territory, had been guilty of such conduct that the Portuguese of San Paulo had expelled them from Guayrá, and lastly stated that he himself had secret orders from the King to expel the Order from Paraguay.

He commenced the business of expulsion by attempting to eject the Jesuits from San Isidro, but here the Governor forbade him to act, and he turned on the college at Asuncion, gathering an army of

partisans and attempting to expel the Jesuits thence. But the decision of the High Court at Charcas arrived, advising the Bishop to live peaceably with all men and to govern his diocese with zeal, and ordering him to restore all fines which he had exacted. The Bishop stuck to the fines, and, though he left the Jesuit college alone for the time being, continued to do his best to stir up animosity against the Jesuits, issued his usual edict of excommunication against them, and retired to Yaguaron with a considerable following. Thence he sent a further relation of his doings and of the Governor's persecutions to the High Court at Charcas, while Hinostrosa also forwarded his report.

But before any reply could arrive at Asuncion, the Governor lost all patience, elected Don Cristobal Sanchez as Bishop of Asuncion, and deported Cardenas by force. The latter went out from the town after launching a supreme anathema, and, arriving at Corrientes, received two citations from the High Court at Charcas to appear there and answer the charges brought against him. He failed to answer these, but sought by all means in his power to return to Asuncion. In 1648 Hinostrosa was replaced by Don Diego Escobar de Osorio as Governor of Paraguay, and Cardenas returned. His first success against the Jesuits was the displacing of their priests from two missions which practically formed frontier stations in the north of the country, and substituting priests of another Order. The consequences of this folly soon showed in the ruin of the missions, and the Court at Charcas,

hearing what had been done, ordered the reinstatement of the Jesuits. Father Mançilla, a worthy Jesuit missionary, died of the privations he endured in trying to bring back the Indians from their wilds to the missions.

But Cardenas succeeded in inflaming the populace of Asuncion against the Jesuits, and at this critical juncture the Governor died. The Bishop had himself appointed interim governor, and at once proclaimed that he had authority from the King to expel the Jesuits. He succeeded in expelling all the priests of the Order from the college at Asuncion, and deported them to Corrientes, where the city authorities pressed them to build a college and settle down.

The High Court at Charcas, however, being apprised of this proceeding, issued a decree summoning Cardenas to appear at the Court, appointed Don Andres Garabito de Leon interim Captain-General of Paraguay, and Sebastian de Leon commander until the arrival of Don Andres. Cardenas, as usual, declined to go to Charcas, and Don Sebastian, gathering an army together, met and defeated the forces which the Bishop and self-appointed governor opposed to him on the plain of Campo Grande, near Luqué. In spite of his assumption of powers which were never his, Cardenas remained as Bishop of Asuncion until 1650, but Don Sebastian gradually undermined his influence and reduced his following. At last he went to Charcas to appear before the Court there, and ceased to trouble Paraguay. In 1654 a royal decision freed the Jesuits from all

charges brought against them, but in spite of this the seven charges of Cardenas—especially that of concealing and working mines for their own benefit—lived on.

The troubles in Asuncion, brought about by Cardenas, had had comparatively slight effect in the Misiones territory. Here the Jesuits worked on with gradually increasing success among the Guaranís, and with very little result among the fierce tribes of the Chaco. Out of the uncivilised Guaranís they succeeded, according to the inventories taken by Bucareli at the time of the expulsion, in producing skilled cotton weavers, tailors, and joiners; they established tanneries, trained carpenters, hat-makers, coopers, cordage-makers, boat-builders, cartwrights, and taught their converts almost every civilised art. They turned out armourers, silversmiths, painters, and musicians, and printers who produced many books from the presses constructed at the missions, and they taught the art of illuminating manuscripts in high perfection.

The establishment of each Reduction was a form of communism with the priests at its head. The whole community worked in common, and all goods were used in common, each member receiving a stock sufficient for maintenance—so long as he did his share of work. Surplus capital was used in purchasing necessities from Spain and Buenos Aires as occasion demanded. Clothing and all necessities were served out by the priests, and though in some cases the Indians were permitted to own land and stock, they were compelled to hand in all produce to the general

store. As the Guaranís were an unambitious and thriftless race, this form of government suited them better than any other would have done. The chief exports from the missions were cotton and linen cloth, tobacco, various hardwoods, hides, and *maté*, or Paraguayan tea.

In the territory of the Gran Chaco the Jesuits succeeded in establishing seven Reductions in all, but the history of these is far different from that of the Guaraní missions, for constant peril and frequent martyrdoms at the hands of Abipones, Puizocas, and other tribes were the lot of the pioneers, and they never attained to any solidity or permanent establishment of any size. Still, they continued their efforts here up to the last, and, though they did not meet with an equal amount of success, expended just as much effort on the fierce and intractable habitants of the Chaco as on the more amenable Guaranís.

From the departure of Cardenas up to 1767, the mission work went on, though always the Jesuits were hated by the Spanish colonists for refusing to lend themselves to the enslavement of the Indians, and suspected of concealing rich mines for their own advantage, though independent search had proved the baselessness of this suspicion. At last the decree for the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain and all her colonies was signed, and in June 1767, Bucareli, Governor of Buenos Aires, received an order to put the decree in force in Paraguay. In July of that year he deported all the Jesuit priests of Corrientes, Córdoba, Santa Fé, and Monte Video, and then he set about removing the missionaries of Paraguay.



ON THE RIO PARANÁ.



A SHADY WALK IN APOSTOLES.

Fearing resistance, and knowing what a strong hold the Jesuits had on their Guaraní converts—who numbered at that time over a hundred and fifty thousand, Bucareli prepared and armed a military expedition, with which he embarked for Paraguay on 24th May 1768. At Salto on the Uruguay he disembarked and divided his forces into three bands, setting out as to a conquest.

The Jesuits, however, made no resistance, but delivered up their keys and authority and suffered to be bound like sheep. Seventy-eight mission leaders went prisoners to Buenos Aires, and thence to Spain. Their places were filled by Franciscan and Dominican priests, who had had little or no experience of mission work.

Bucareli framed laws for the maintenance of the missions on the lines followed by their original founders, but with the passing of the Jesuits passed the spirit that had made for success. Corruption and selfish ends on the part of these new masters alienated the confidence of the Guaranís, who seceded from the Reductions at such a rate that in thirty years from the expulsion of the Jesuits the missions had fallen into decay, and the work was at an end.

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